

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

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## A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

In Three Books.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

### BOOK THE THIRD. THE TRACK OF A STORM.

#### CHAPTER XI. DUSK.

THE wretched wife of the innocent man thus doomed to die, fell under the sentence, as if she had been mortally stricken. But, she uttered no sound; and so strong was the voice within her, representing that it was she of all the world who must uphold him in his misery and not augment it, that it quickly raised her, even from that shock.

The judges having to take part in a public demonstration out of doors, the tribunal adjourned. The quick noise and movement of the court's emptying itself by many passages had not ceased, when Lucie stood stretching out her arms towards her husband, with nothing in her face but love and consolation.

"If I might touch him! If I might embrace him once! O, good citizens, if you would have so much compassion for us!"

There was but a gaoler left, along with two of the four men who had taken him last night, and Barsad. The people had all poured out to the show in the streets. Barsad proposed to the rest, "Let her embrace him, then; it is but a moment." It was silently acquiesced in, and they passed her over the seats in the hall to a raised place, where he, by leaning over the dock, could fold her in his arms.

"Farewell, dear darling of my soul. My parting blessing on my love. We shall meet again, where the weary are at rest!"

They were her husband's words, as he held her to his bosom.

"I can bear it, dear Charles. I am supported from above; don't suffer for me. A parting blessing for our child."

"I send it her by you. I kiss her by you. I say farewell to her by you."

"My husband. No! A moment!" He was tearing himself apart from her. "We shall not be separated long. I feel that this will break my heart by-and-by; but I will do my duty while I can, and when I leave her, God will raise up friends for her, as He did for me."

Her father had followed her, and would have fallen on his knees to both of them, but that Darnay put out a hand and seized him, crying:

"No, no! What have you done, what have you done, that you should kneel to us! We know now, what a struggle you made of old. We know now, what you underwent when you suspected my descent, and when you knew it. We know now, the natural antipathy you strove against, and conquered, for her dear sake. We thank you with all our hearts, and all our love and duty. Heaven be with you!"

Her father's only answer was to draw his hands through his white hair, and wring them with a shriek of anguish.

"It could not be otherwise," said the prisoner. "All things have worked together as they have fallen out. It was the always-vain endeavour to discharge my poor mother's trust, that first brought my fatal presence near you. Good could never come of such evil, a happier end was not in nature to so unhappy a beginning. Be comforted, and forgive me. Heaven bless you!"

As he was drawn away, his wife released him, and stood looking after him with her hands touching one another in the attitude of prayer, and with a radiant look upon her face, in which there was even a comforting smile. As he went out at the prisoners' door, she turned, laid her head lovingly on her father's breast, tried to speak to him, and fell at his feet.

Then, issuing from the obscure corner from which he had never moved, Sydney Carton came and took her up. Only her father and Mr. Lorry were with her. His arm trembled as it raised her, and supported her head. Yet, there was an air about him that was not all of pity—that had a flush of pride in it.

"Shall I take her to a coach? I shall never feel her weight."

He carried her lightly to the door, and laid her tenderly down in a coach. Her father and their old friend got into it, and he took his seat beside the driver.

When they arrived at the gateway where he had paused in the dark not many hours before, to picture to himself on which of the rough stones of the street her feet had trodden, he lifted her again, and carried her up the staircase to their rooms. There, he laid her down on a couch, where her child and Miss Pross wept over her.

"Don't recal her to herself," he said, softly, to the latter, "she is better so; don't revive her to consciousness, while she only faints."

"Oh, Carton, Carton, dear Carton!" cried little Lucie, springing up and throwing her arms passionately round him, in a burst of grief. "Now that you have come, I think you will do something to help mamma, something to save papa! O, look at her, dear Carton! Can you, of all the people who love her, bear to see her so?"

He bent over the child, and laid her blooming cheek against his face. He put her gently from him, and looked at her unconscious mother.

"Before I go," he said, and paused.—"I may kiss her?"

It was remembered afterwards that when he bent down and touched her face with his lips, he murmured some words. The child, who was nearest to him, told them afterwards, and told her grandchildren when she was a handsome old lady, that she heard him say, "A life you love."

When he had gone out into the next room, he turned suddenly on Mr. Lorry and her father, who were following, and said to the latter:

"You had great influence but yesterday, Doctor Manette; let it, at least, be tried. These judges, and all the men in power, are very friendly to you, and very recognisant of your services; are they not?"

"Nothing connected with Charles was concealed from me. I had the strongest assurances that I should save him; and I did." He returned the answer in great trouble, and very slowly.

"Try them again. The hours between this and to-morrow afternoon are few and short, but try."

"I intend to try. I will not rest a moment."

"That's well. I have known such energy as yours do great things before now—though never," he added, with a smile and a sigh together, "such great things as this. But try! Of little worth as life is when we misuse it, it is worth that effort. It would cost nothing to lay down if it were not."

"I will go," said Doctor Manette, "to the Prosecutor and the President straight, and I will go to others whom it is better not to name. I will write, too, and—But stay! There is a celebration in the streets, and no one will be accessible until dark."

"That's true. Well! It is a forlorn hope at the best, and not much the forlornier for being delayed till dark. I should like to know how you speed; though, mind! I expect nothing! When are you likely to have seen these dread powers, Doctor Manette?"

"Immediately after dark, I should hope. Within an hour or two from this."

"It will be dark soon after four. Let us stretch the hour or two. If I go to Mr. Lorry's at nine, shall I hear what you have done, either from our friend or from yourself?"

"Yes."

"May you prosper!"

Mr. Lorry followed Sydney to the outer door, and, touching him on the shoulder as he was going away, caused him to turn.

"I have no hope," said Mr. Lorry, in a low and sorrowful whisper.

"Nor have I."

"If any of these men, or all of these men, were disposed to spare him—which is a large supposition; for what is his life, or any man's, to them!—I doubt if they durst spare him after the demonstration in the Court."

"And so do I. I heard the fall of the axe in that sound."

Mr. Lorry leaned his arm upon the door-post, and bowed his face upon it.

"Don't despond," said Carton, very gently; "don't grieve. I encouraged Doctor Manette in this idea, because I felt that it might one day be consolatory to her. Otherwise, she might think 'his life was wantonly thrown away or wasted,' and that might trouble her."

"Yes, yes, yes," returned Mr. Lorry, drying his eyes, "you are right. But he will perish; there is no real hope."

"Yes. He will perish; there is no real hope," echoed Carton. And walked with a settled step, down stairs.

#### CHAPTER XII. DARKNESS.

SYDNEY CARTON paused in the street, not quite decided where to go. "At Tellson's banking-house at nine," he said, with a musing face. "Shall I do well, in the mean time, to show myself? I think so. It is best that these people should know there is such a man as I here; it is a sound precaution, and may be a necessary preparation. But, care, care, care! Let me think it out."

Checking his steps which had begun to tend towards an object, he took a turn or two in the already darkening street, and traced the thought in his mind to its possible consequences. His first impression was confirmed. "It is best," he said, finally resolved, "that these people should know there is such a man as I here." And he turned his face towards Saint Antoine.

Defarge had described himself, that day, as the keeper of a wine-shop in the Saint Antoine suburb. It was not difficult for one who knew the city well, to find his house without asking any question. Having ascertained its situation, Carton came out of those closer streets again, and dined at a place of refreshment and fell sound asleep after dinner. For the first time in many years, he had no strong drink. Since last night he had taken nothing but a little light thin wine, and last night he had dropped the brandy slowly down on Mr. Lorry's hearth like a man who had done with it.

It was as late as seven o'clock when he awoke refreshed, and went out into the streets again. As he passed along towards Saint Antoine, he stopped at a shop-window where there was a mirror, and slightly altered the disordered arrangement of his loose cravat, and his coat-collar, and his wild hair. This done, he went on direct to Defarge's, and went in.

There happened to be no customer in the shop but Jacques Three, of the restless fingers and the croaking voice. This man whom he had seen upon the Jury, stood drinking at the little counter, in conversation with the Defarges, man

and wife. The Vengeance assisted in the conversation, like a regular member of the establishment.

As Carton walked in, took his seat, and asked (in very indifferent French) for a small measure of wine, Madame Defarge cast a careless glance at him, and then a keener, and then a keener, and then advanced to him herself, and asked him what it was he had ordered.

He repeated what he had already said.

"English?" asked Madame Defarge, inquisitively raising her dark eyebrows.

After looking at her, as if the sound of even a single French word were slow to express itself to him, he answered, in his former strong foreign accent. "Yes, Madame, yes. I am English!"

Madame Defarge returned to her counter to get the wine, and, as he took up a Jacobin journal and feigned to pore over it puzzling out its meaning, he heard her say, "I swear to you, like Evrémonte!"

Defarge brought him the wine, and gave him Good Evening.

"How?"

"Good evening."

"Oh! Good evening, citizen," filling his glass. "Ah! and good wine. I drink to the Republic."

Defarge went back to the counter, and said, "Certainly, a little like." Madame sternly retorted, "I tell you a good deal like." Jacques Three pacifically remarked, "He is so much in your mind, see you, madame." The amiable Vengeance added, with a laugh, "Yes, my faith! And you are looking forward with so much pleasure to seeing him once more to-morrow!"

Carton followed the lines and words of his paper, with a slow forefinger, and with a studious and absorbed face. They were all leaning their arms on the counter close together, speaking low. After a silence of a few moments, during which they had all looked towards him without disturbing his outward attention from the Jacobin editor, they resumed their conversation.

"It is true, what madame says," observed Jacques Three. "Why stop? There is great force in that. Why stop?"

"Well, well," reasoned Defarge, "but one must stop somewhere. After all, the question is still where?"

"At extermination," said madame.

"Magnificent!" croaked Jacques Three. The Vengeance, also, highly approved.

"Extermination is good doctrine, my wife," said Defarge, rather troubled; "in general, I say nothing against it. But this Doctor has suffered much; you have seen him to-day; you have observed his face when the paper was read."

"I have observed his face!" repeated madame, contemptuously and angrily. "Yes, I have observed his face. I have observed his face to be not the face of a true friend of the Republic. Let him take care of his face!"

"And you have observed, my wife," said Defarge, in a deprecatory manner, "the anguish of his daughter, which must be dreadful anguish to him!"

"I have observed his daughter!" repeated madame; "yes, I have observed his daughter, more times than one. I have observed her to-day, and I have observed her other days. I have observed her in the court; and I have observed her in the street by the prison. Let me but lift my finger——!" She seemed to raise it (the listener's eyes were always on his paper), and to let it fall with a rattle on the ledge before her, as if the axe had dropped.

"The citizeness is superb!" croaked the Juryman.

"She is an Angel!" said The Vengeance, and embraced her.

"As to thee," pursued madame, implacably, addressing her husband, "if it depended on thee—which, happily, it does not—thou wouldst rescue this man even now."

"No!" protested Defarge. "Not if to lift this glass would do it! But I would leave the matter there. I say, stop there."

"See you then, Jacques," said Madame Defarge, wrathfully; "and see you too, my little Vengeance; see you both! Listen! For other crimes as tyrants and oppressors, I have this race a long time on my register, doomed to destruction and extermination. Ask my husband is that so?"

"It is so," assented Defarge, without being asked.

"In the beginning of the great days, when the Bastille falls, he finds this paper of to-day, and he brings it home, and in the middle of the night when this place is clear and shut, we read it, here on this spot, by the light of this lamp. Ask him, is that so?"

"It is so," assented Defarge.

"That night, I tell him when the paper is read through, and the lamp is burnt out, and the day is gleaming in above those shutters and between those iron bars, that I have now a secret to communicate. Ask him, is that so?"

"It is so," assented Defarge again.

"I communicate to him that secret. I smite this bosom with these two hands as I smite it now, and I tell him, 'Defarge, I was brought up among the fishermen of the sea-shore, and that peasant-family so injured by the two Evrémonte brothers, as that Bastille paper describes, is my family. Defarge, that sister of the mortally wounded boy upon the ground was my sister, that husband was my sister's husband, that unborn child was their child, that brother was my brother, that father was my father, those dead are my dead, and that summons to answer for those things descends to me!' Ask him, is that so?"

"It is so," assented Defarge once more.

"Then tell Wind and Fire where to stop," returned madame; "but don't tell me."

Both her hearers derived a horrible enjoyment from the deadly nature of her wrath—the listener could feel how white she was, without seeing her—and both highly commended it. Defarge, a weak minority, interposed a few words for the memory of the compassionate wife of the Marquis; but, only elicited from his own wife a repetition of her last reply. "Tell

the Wind and the Fire where to stop; not me!"

Customers entered, and the group was broken up. The English customer paid for what he had had, perplexedly counted his change, and asked, as a stranger, to be directed towards the National Palace. Madame Defarge took him to the door, and put her arm on his, in pointing out the road. The English customer was not without his reflections then, that it might be a good deed to seize that arm, lift it, and strike under it sharp and deep.

But, he went his way, and was soon swallowed up in the shadow of the prison wall. At the appointed hour, he emerged from it to present himself in Mr. Lorry's room again, where he found the old gentleman walking to and fro in restless anxiety. He said he had been with Lucie until just now, and had only left her for a few minutes, to come and keep his appointment. Her father had not been seen, since he quitted the banking-house towards four o'clock. She had some faint hopes that his mediation might save Charles, but they were very slight. He had been more than five hours gone: where could he be?

Mr. Lorry waited until ten; but, Doctor Manette not returning, and he being unwilling to leave Lucie any longer, it was arranged that he should go back to her, and come to the banking-house again at midnight. In the mean while, Carton would wait alone by the fire for the Doctor.

He waited and waited, and the clock struck twelve; but, Doctor Manette did not come back. Mr. Lorry returned, and found no tidings of him, and brought none. Where could he be?

They were discussing this question, and were almost building up some weak structure of hope on his prolonged absence, when they heard him on the stairs. The instant he entered the room, it was plain that all was lost.

Whether he had really been to any one, or whether he had been all that time traversing the streets, was never known. As he stood staring at them, they asked him no question, for his face told them everything.

"I cannot find it," said he, "and I must have it. Where is it?"

His head and throat were bare, and, as he spoke with a helpless look straying all around, he took his coat off, and let it drop on the floor.

"Where is my bench? I have been looking everywhere for my bench, and I can't find it. What have they done with my work? Time presses: I must finish those shoes."

They looked at one another, and their hearts died within them.

"Come, come!" said he, in a whimpering miserable way; "let me get to work. Give me my work."

Receiving no answer, he tore his hair, and beat his feet upon the ground, like a distracted child.

"Don't torture a poor forlorn wretch," he implored them, with a dreadful cry; "but give me my work! What is to become of us, if those shoes are not done to-night?"

Lost, utterly lost!

It was so clearly beyond hope, to reason with him, or try to restore him, that—as if by agreement—they each put a hand upon his shoulder, and soothed him to sit down before the fire, with a promise, that he should have his work presently. He sank into the chair, and brooded over the embers, and shed tears. As if all that had happened since the garret time were a momentary fancy, or a dream, Mr. Lorry saw him shrink into the exact figure that Defarge had had in keeping.

Affected and impressed with terror as they both were, by this spectacle of ruin, it was not a time to yield to such emotions. His lonely daughter, bereft of her final hope and reliance, appealed to them both, too strongly. Again, as if by agreement, they looked at one another with one meaning in their faces. Carton was the first to speak:

"The last chance is gone: it was not much. Yes; he had better be taken to her. But, before you go, will you, for a moment, steadily attend to me? Don't ask me why I make the stipulations I am going to make, and exact the promise I am going to exact; I have a reason—a good one."

"I do not doubt it," answered Mr. Lorry. "Say on."

The figure in the chair between them, was all the time monotonously rocking itself to and fro, and moaning. They spoke in such a tone as they would have used if they had been watching by a sick-bed in the night.

Carton stooped to pick up the coat, which lay almost entangling his feet. As he did so, a small case in which the Doctor was accustomed to carry the list of his day's duties, fell lightly on the floor. Carton took it up, and there was a folded paper in it. "We should look at this?" he said. Mr. Lorry nodded his consent. He opened it, and exclaimed, "Thank God!"

"What is it?" asked Mr. Lorry, eagerly.

"A moment! Let me speak of it in its place. First," he put his hand in his coat, and took another paper from it, "that is the certificate which enables me to pass out of this city. Look at it. You see—Sydney Carton, an Englishman?"

Mr. Lorry held it open in his hand, gazing in his earnest face.

"Keep it for me until to-morrow. I shall see him to-morrow, you remember, and I had better not take it into the prison."

"Why not?"

"I don't know: I prefer not to do so. Now, take this paper that Doctor Manette has carried about him. It is a similar certificate, enabling him and his daughter and her child, at any time, to pass the Barrier and the frontier? You see?"

"Yes!"

"Perhaps he obtained it as his last and utmost precaution against evil, yesterday. When is it dated? But no matter; don't stay to look; put it up carefully with mine and your own. Now, observe! I never doubted until



within this hour or two, that he had, or could have, such a paper. It is good, until recalled. But it may be soon recalled, and, I have reason to think, will be."

"They are not in danger?"

"They are in great danger. They are in danger of denunciation by Madame Defarge. I know it from her own lips. I have overheard words of that woman's, to-night, which have presented their danger to me in strong colours. I have lost no time, and since then, I have seen the spy. He confirms me. He knows that a wood-sawyer, living by the prison-wall, is under the control of the Defarges, and has been rehearsed by Madame Defarge as to his having seen Her"—he never mentioned Lucie's name—"making signs and signals to prisoners. It is easy to foresee that the pretence will be the common one, a prison plot, and that it will involve her life—and perhaps her child's—and perhaps her father's—for both have been seen with her at that place. Don't look so horrified. You will save them all."

"Heaven grant I may, Carton! But how?"

"I am going to tell you how. It will depend on you, and it could depend on no better man. This new denunciation will certainly not take place until after to-morrow; probably not until two or three days afterwards; more probably a week afterwards. You know it is a capital crime, to mourn for, or sympathise with, a victim of the Guillotine. She and her father would unquestionably be guilty of this crime, and this woman (the inveteracy of whose pursuit cannot be described) would wait to add that strength to her case, and make herself doubly sure. You follow me?"

"So attentively, and with so much confidence in what you say, that for the moment I lose sight," touching the back of the Doctor's chair, "even of this distress."

"You have money, and can buy the means of travelling to the sea-coast as quickly as the journey can be made. Your preparations have been completed for some days to return to England. Early to-morrow, have your horses ready, so that they may be in starting trim at two o'clock in the afternoon."

"It shall be done!"

His manner was so fervent and inspiring, that Mr. Lorry caught the flame, and was as quick as youth.

"You are a noble heart. Did I say we could depend upon no better man? Tell her, to-night, what you know of her danger as involving her child and her father. Dwell upon that, for she would lay her own fair head beside her husband's, cheerfully." He faltered for an instant; then went on as before. "For the sake of her child and her father, press upon her the necessity of leaving Paris, with them and you, at that hour. Tell her that it was her husband's last arrangement. Tell her that more depends upon it than she dare believe, or hope. You think that her father, even in this sad state, will submit himself to her; do you not?"

"I am sure of it."

"I thought so. Quietly and steadily, have all these arrangements made in the court-yard here, even to the taking of your own seat in the carriage. The moment I come to you, take me in, and drive away."

"I understand that I wait for you, under all circumstances?"

"You have my certificate in your hand with the rest, you know, and will reserve my place. Wait for nothing but to have my place occupied, and then for England!"

"Why, then," said Mr. Lorry, grasping his eager but so firm and steady hand, "it does not all depend on one old man, but I shall have a young and ardent man at my side."

"By the help of Heaven you shall! Promise me solemnly, that nothing will influence you to alter the course on which we now stand pledged to one another."

"Nothing, Carton."

"Remember these words to-morrow: change the course, or delay in it—for any reason—and no life can possibly be saved, and many lives must inevitably be sacrificed."

"I will remember them. I hope to do my part faithfully."

"And I hope to do mine. Now, good-by!"

Though he said it with a grave smile of earnestness, and though he even put the old man's hand to his lips, he did not part from him then. He helped him so far to arouse the rocking figure before the dying embers, as to get a cloak and hat put upon it, and to tempt it forth to find where the bench and work were hidden that it still moaningly besought to have. He walked on the other side of it and protected it to the court-yard of the house where the afflicted heart—so happy in the memorable time when he had revealed his own desolate heart to it—outwatched the awful night. He entered the court-yard and remained there for a few moments alone, looking up at the light in the window of her room. Before he went away, he breathed a blessing towards it, and a Farewell.

#### SUBTERRANEAN SWITZERLAND.

FORMERLY, books, records, human authorities (as they were called), transmitted occasional truths, but more frequently error after error, to successive generations. Strange assertions appeared to be truths, because the venerable but credulous Pliny, or such as Pliny, had delivered them, *ex cathedra*, to mankind. Now, we choose to see and judge for ourselves. Even history, which emphatically might be termed a science of record, is obeying the universal rule. If we do not supersede, we, at least, strive to authenticate history by the evidence of our eyes. And how do we effect this? Precisely by the same method that the geologist makes use of, when he is so wise—or, as poor Cowper thought, so sinful—as to

Drill and bore

The solid earth, and from the strata there  
Extract a register.

To the earth, man instinctively turns for the archives of the past—to the earth—the great Keeper of the dead—the Preserver of extinct forms and vanished dynasties. We rifle tombs; we drive pits into buried cities; we plunge into railway cuttings; and so lay bare, and extract, the life of other days, as it is made manifest in its domestic implements, its handiworks, and ornaments, its modes of sepulture, and scrolls of epitaph. For many a year we have been burrowing thus: so that, since the day when, in seventeen hundred and eleven, Herculaneum gave up to view her first secrets, subterranean research has become an art that is already advancing to a respectable maturity. But the immense stride forward that it has made in our day, is owing to the multitude of objects and observations that have been so discovered and accumulated as to admit of chronology being founded, not on conjectural eras, but on the objects themselves, which, wheresoever found, illustrate and determine those eras. The old natural geology loosely judged of periods by the mere substances in which certain fossils were found. It babbled of the green-sand fossils, the fossils of the coal, the fossils of the chalk, &c. But this method of classification was found to be misleading and imperfect. "It is well known" (as Sir R. I. Murchison in his *Siluria* observes) "that a mass of sediment which in one tract is calcareous, often becomes sandy and argillaceous in another; and thus, in such cases, very close examination of the fossils can alone decide the exact line of demarcation." To this I add, from my own observation, that, in Switzerland, where there is no chalk, the peculiar fossils belonging to the cretaceous period are found in clay. Safely and rightly, then, each period of ascending organisation is decided by the fossil which is unalterable, and not by the local matter around it, which is susceptible of very great and surprising transformation. So it is with Human Geology. Recent works on ancient pottery take the line of judging of the age of a vase by form and manner of embellishment, not by the locality in which the vase is found. The Etrurian tomb, in which certain urns are discovered, does not prove that the urns are Etrurian; the forms of them, and the pigments, and the figures on them, may determine that they are of Greek, or haply of Egyptian origin, and that they have come from afar.

The same analytical argument that has been found satisfactory in respect to earth-buried objects, is now being applied to certain relics of antiquity discovered in water. The discovery has taken place in some of the lakes of Switzerland; and it is found that these relics are indubitably of a period far anterior to the Roman conquest. Traces of lake dwellings, even of lake villages, have been discovered; that is, of cabins that have rested on piles, advancing, Dutch fashion, far into the water. The most remarkable of these discoveries was made in eighteen hundred and fifty-six, in the Lake of Moosseedorf, six miles from Berne. This lake, having been partially drained for agricultural purposes, gave to view the broken remains of stakes projecting a little above the mud that formed the bed of the lake. A further search revealed that many more stakes were hidden; being covered by a kind of under-water peat, in which have been found upwards of a thousand articles of a simple, and evidently very remote manufacture.

Taking for granted that a nation in its infancy uses, for its immediate purposes, only the substances which it finds ready to its hand, we cannot but assign to articles composed merely of stone, wood, or clay, a high antiquity. Reversing old fables, we discover that the golden age was not the age of gold, but of wood and stone. Of course these primitive substances, worked by human hands, have the priority over articles wrought from metal. Ops gave Saturn a stone to devour, long before Vulcan (scripturally Tubal Cain) became "the instructor of every artificer in brass and iron." Judging thus, we find that the articles from the Lake of Moosseedorf bear the stamp of primitive antiquity. They consist of fragments of rude pottery, made by the hand, evidently without a turning-wheel, domestic implements in stone and stag's-horn, without any trace of metal. The stone—a kind of serpentine, extremely hard—is fashioned into hatchets bearing the form of a wedge, and into instruments resembling chisels, hammers, and knives. Not one of the hatchets has been pierced—as in our day—so as to admit of a handle being inserted into it; on the contrary, the stone hatchet-head itself has been inserted into a handle, generally of stag's-horn, in some few cases, of wood.

Passing some time at Lausanne, I was made aware of these discoveries in, and near to, the Lake of Moosseedorf; and obtained a note of introduction to Professor Troyon, head of the Museum at Lausanne, who had transferred from the natural Museum of the Peat-moss, a quantity of the sub-lacustrine articles to a well-ordered museum of his own.

The professor, a most intelligent gentleman, with a benevolent countenance, began his lecture (for such, unaffected as it was, his discourse might be called) by opening a cupboard and displaying a variety of human skulls. These were all the skulls of Helvetians, or of Celts prior to Helvetians, or of some unnamed people older than the Celts. These, like many other articles in this private museum, had been chiefly discovered or dug up from ancient tumuli by the professor himself. He made me observe how small were the earliest skulls—unintellectual, but not cruel like some of later savage nations in which the great proportion of brain lay behind the ear; and so led me on to the higher developments of the skulls of the civilised, that occupied the upper shelves of the closet. We next proceeded to survey the contents of the first glass case, which were supposed to be coeval with the small-skulled generation. These were the horn

and stone industrial implements, that had recently been discovered in the Moosseedorf and other lakes in Switzerland; yet, even here, I should say, that the ingenuity displayed in the structure of these peculiar instruments betokened a people already somewhat advanced out of the first state of barbarism. The odd thing, that strikes an observer first, is the small, toy-like character of everything. Hatchet, indeed! One of these Lake-people hatchets lies on the quarter-sheet of foolscap on which I am writing, with room to spare. It is a pretty baby-hatchet, a piece of serpentine, not two inches long (very well sharpened, however), inserted with wonderful firmness into a detached portion of stag's-horn. I asked the professor, "Could any one have ever cut down a tree with that small thing?" The professor replied that by marks found on the old buried timber, it appeared probable that the ancient Lakers charred and nearly burnt through the trunks of the trees before they felled them with their miniature stone-hatchets. My attention was next turned to a dandy poniard, entirely of stag's-horn. A sharp-pointed and polished piece of horn, about four inches long, is inserted into an unpolished piece of antler, somewhat longer. The professor suggested that the handle of this poniard was worn almost smooth by use. I said, "Could the owner have killed so many men as that implies?" "No!" returned the professor, with a smile; "but the dagger may have served many uses—as a defence from wild beasts, to kill animals in the chase, and, perhaps, now and then, to despatch an enemy." Next, I admired a variety of small instruments that would have gone into a lady's étui—needles of bone, not perforated, and even a bodkin, properly perforated, a specimen almost unique: small chisels of beautifully polished serpentine, some of which looked quite gem-like in their green half-transparent lustre. These were supposed to be for cutting leather for mocassins or other garments. Then I noticed teeth of the red deer fastened into handles of rough horn. These, it is supposed, were used for polishing down the protuberant seams of barbarian dresses.

Very curious, indeed, were certain minute saws, not more than three inches long, like reductions of Queen Elizabeth's pocket-comb, with the teeth broken off. These flint saws, and one or two scoop-like articles that looked as if meant to scrape off the hair from deer-hides, also of flint, give rise, as Professor Troyon observed, to curious speculations. Flint of any kind is very rare in Switzerland, and flint of the particular kind from which the ancient Lakers had wrought their saws and knives, is not found in Switzerland.

The induction is, that the Lake-people were already sufficiently advanced in civilisation, to have made the first step towards commerce by import, or barter. The especial silex of the Lakers might have come from some neighbouring portion of Gaul; but, in truth, it resembled more the kind of flint that is found on our own British coasts. To have fashioned a flint knife,

such as was shown me, four inches long, the improving savages of the Lacustrine period must have had a very large flint-stone, such as Great Britain peculiarly produces. Waving a too precise settlement of this curious question, we, at least, are sure that the flint found at Moosseedorf was not a native production of Switzerland. There were also small arrow-heads prettily and neatly wrought from a fine kind of silex.

Under a glass and framed like a picture, I observed something that looked like coarse dark netting, the reticulations of which were jointed by rude knots. This, the professor told me, was a specimen of the supposed garments of the ancient people; of which the material was flax, and the mode of putting together, knitting, or rather knotting: the art of weaving not yet being practised by the Lakers. Some of the mysterious-looking needles in horn might have served for the manufacture of this primitive sort of shirting.

For food the Lakers had, as the remains of various seeds and fruit-stones demonstrated, the wood-raspberry, the wild plum ("prunus spinosa," which we unlearned schoolboys used to call bullas), small crab-apples, of which a dried and venerable specimen was shown me, and wheaten corn, sundry masses of which, apparently carbonised by fire, demonstrated that agriculture was an art not unknown.

Fragments of bones of various animals, which were discovered in quantities under the peat, and had either been used in the fashioning of instruments, or were the remains of antique repasts, proved that this primitive people already possessed the greater part of the domestic animals of our day. The professor showed me bones enough, in this department, to have served as the basis of a Cuvierian lecture on osteology. The Lakers had certainly gathered round them the ox, the pig, the goat, the cat, and many different sized kinds of dogs; nor had the horse been wanting, though, as the professor conjectured, chiefly used, by a sublime anticipation of Parisian gastronomy, as an article of food. With these were mingled quantities of bones of the elk and stag, the urus, bear, wild-boar, fox, beaver, tortoise, and various kinds of birds. Strange to say, the bones that one would most have expected a Lake-people to have left behind them—fish-bones—were entirely absent; for which absence, however, their chemical decomposition by some unknown agent might by possibility account.

Of what materials the habitations of the primitive Lakers were constructed, the professor now gave me ocular demonstration. First, I was shown what kind of stakes or piles their lake-cabins were elevated upon; the stakes themselves I did not see, only casts of them; for, when these very ancient piles were first taken out of the peat they had looked fresh and solid as those human bodies which have occasionally been found in airless stone coffins, bodies which for a moment have mocked the view with a phantasma of fresh life, and, almost immediately after, fallen to dust. So with the



stakes of the old Lakers. Once exposed to the air they crumbled; and their external skin was found to be only a feeble covering to rottenness. Professor Troyon, then, cleverly devised a mode of perpetuating these fleeting forms, by injections of plaster, from which moulds and casts were obtained. These casts, short and fragmentary, looked very like the ends of not very large hop-poles. The marks of the stone-chisels were still plainly discernible on the stakes, and they were sharpened to a point. The cabins that had been raised on these piles had left more enduring fragments. Most interesting were the morsels of old wall, which consisted of unbaked clay, bearing the impressions of woody twigs, whereby it was evident that the primitive cabins had been formed of boughs of trees plastered over and between with clay. From the fragments being calculable segments of a circle, two facts were ascertained: namely, that the cabins had been circular, and the circumference of them about fourteen feet. Some of these fragmentary piles and dwellings that were found in the Lake of Constance were above a hundred yards from the shore; and that they always had been so, and had not been thrown farther off from the mainland by any rising or agitation of the waters, was proved by pieces of earthen pots that lay at the bottom on the stirless depths, so near together, just as they had broken and fallen ages before, that much pottery had been reconstructed from such fragments. I observe, in passing, that the fragments of pottery are of rough manufacture, and, in their dark burnt-looking substance contain morsels of shining quartz, or mica, unassimilated to the prevailing texture. I possess some fragments, that, by carrying out the segments of the circle, appear to have been of great size (singular exception to the general littleness of the relics): as big, indeed, as Roman wine-vases. Another thing to be observed, is, the way these pots were evidently supported. They had pointed ends, and near them are found circular open rings of pottery, whose use was evidently to support the pointed ends of the vases, which were incapable of standing by themselves. The ring of burnt clay was the mortise, the pegtop-like termination was the tenon of the vase. In connexion with this, the professor told me that Admiral Elliot, who had visited the museum, recognised this primitive form of support as still used by the Hindoos and other Indian people.

This brings me to the probable origin of these ancient predecessors of the Swiss. They were a wave of that great tide which set in towards Europe from the East, choosing chiefly the inland seas, and ascending rivers as their roadways, or rather waterways, to new regions, where they should replenish the tenantless earth. Naturally such tribes, accustomed to water, chose water whereon to found their first settlements. Moreover, the long narrow causeways of wood, that led from the shore to their habitations, became a protection to them from wild beasts, or wilder human enemies. Also the waters supplied them with ready food, and

were as Nature's own clearings amidst the shaggy mountains and impenetrable forests, the mere fringe of which they with difficulty cut away for household purposes. Advanced into the free lake, the settlers could look around them and breathe the air of heaven. Herodotus has described similar lacustrine dwellings belonging to the Pæonians, who had settled on Lake Prasias, in Turkey.

When I asked the professor, "Why the implements of this ancient race were so baby-like and small?" he replied, "Probably because they themselves were small, and, like the Orientals, had very small hands and feet. However," he continued, "this is not conjecture, but fact. Look here at the next case in my museum, where you perceive ornaments of a more advanced period, though still belonging to the Lake-people. Look at these bracelets of horn, so deep in circumference but so small in diameter; you would think that even a child's hand could not enter them; yet here are the human bones still in them." This was true. The professor, finding the bracelets on the skeleton of a full-grown person, had fixed the bones of the wrist within the bracelets by pouring cement round them. "Look, also," resumed the professor, "at that bronze sword, still later in date, found at a time when the Age of Wood and Stone became the Age of Bronze; observe that the handle is only coextensive with three of my fingers, though my hand, like myself, is not very big. I met, some time ago, a Peruvian lady, who was the last descendant of Montezuma, and hers was the only hand and wrist I have ever known slip easily into that bracelet, which is as inflexible for the hand as Cinderella's glass slipper was for the feet."

That these Lake relics are, in very truth, of a most remote antiquity, was proved in various ways by Professor Troyon. He said, "A discovery that was made in the valley of the Orbe may give an idea of this antiquity. The Lake of Neuchâtel, it is well known, is always, because of the increase of the peat-bogs and the delta of alluvial matter formed by the rivers Thiele and Buron, retreating farther back from the Lake of Neuchâtel. In the time of the Romans, the actual site of Yverdon was under water. There was even a time when all the valley was covered by the lake. Then Mount Chamblon was an island, and, at the foot of this mount, were Lake-villages of the ancient people, whose relics, which are all of the Age of Stone, are now found many feet below the surface of the bog. By accurate calculation of the time that the lake now takes in its retreatings, we find that the destruction of these lake-dwellings must have occurred, at latest, in the fifteenth century before the Christian era.

"But here is another proof of this," continued the professor. "Look at these fir-poles which were found in the Lake of Geneva, the supports of ancient villages of a later date, though still of a period long previous to the Roman conquest. You see that they are the real wood, while I only possess casts of the



primitive poles; and that they are not only much longer than the ancient stakes, but curiously worn to a gradual slenderness, and to a point, by the gentle but constant action of the waves upon their upper surfaces. Why is this difference? Because these poles, when discovered, still projected two or three feet above the mud of the lake, while the others were covered by the mud itself. Now it is calculated that a thousand years, at least, must have elapsed before the fir-poles could be brought, by the slow action of tideless water, to the level of the bed of the lake."

I own that these reasons did not quite convince me of the deduction at which the professor wished to arrive: namely, that the first, and not altogether savage, inhabitants of Switzerland, dated from two thousand years before Christ. Many circumstances—draining, for instance—might, I thought, have expedited the retiring of the waters, or the wearing away of the piles. Nevertheless, with all the caution of scepticism, it is impossible not to allow that the Lake-relics proceed from an age long anterior to the Christian era, and very far more remote than the Roman conquest. Even supposing the objects now discovered, to be coeval with the time when Herodotus mentions the Peonian Lakers, they remount to the seventy-fourth Olympiad, answering to four hundred and eighty-four years before Christ—an antiquity to be respected by us poor mortals, who grow old in seventy whirls of our little planet.

Pursuing our investigations, we find that, dark as it may appear in its origin, the end of this Lacustrine Dynasty has a sad light cast upon its cause. The villages, the inhabitants, all evidently perished by a sudden catastrophe; and that catastrophe was Fire.

To understand this, reconstruct, by the architecture of fancy, the primitive villages of the Swiss Lakers. Take your stand on some rock of vantage, whence you can see all that is not water, or snowy summit, covered with black-looking crowded pine-forests that teem with the red-deer—once numerous in Switzerland, now extinct. Throw out your narrow wooden causeways a hundred yards forward into the shallow waters nearest the shore, drive whole quincunxes of fir-poles into the bed of the lake, top them with rudely-fashioned planks, and upon the artificial peninsula now elevated above the waters, transport a bit of rivery Orientalism: dwelling-places for man, gardens, if you wish, or patches of ripened grain (for the catastrophe must have happened at harvest time), such as, even at this day, may be seen floating on the half-quaggy, inundating rivers and channel-pools of China. Penetrate into those circular Red Indian-like wigwams that stand like beehives on the stationary rafts, and see the rude pots upon the earthen shelves, the traps in the floor for catching or preserving fish, the little barbarian children, tethered by the foot with a cord to a projecting stake, lest they fall into the water (both these particularities are mentioned by Herodotus in his account of the Peonians), and

behold the industrious natives themselves, the pigmy race, with their small, but constructive and not cruel heads, and their long, flexible Hindoo-like hands. Enter their manufactories for their ingenious tools and petty ornaments; and, when you have set the whole nation busy at their several employments, suddenly crush the whole of your scene and drama by the irruption of some wild band of warlike Gauls, who annihilate our poor aborigines, and their fragile dwellings, by casting fire-balls into the Lake-villages, and killing or carrying away the inhabitants.

No other combination of circumstances can account for the appearances which the remains of the Lake villages present. The carbonised corn, the pieces of wood half burnt, the marks of fire everywhere, all testify to the destruction of these villages by fire. Then, again, it is apparent that all industry stopped on a sudden. The workman was at his polishing, the housewife was grinding corn by hand between two flat stones, but, by a fate worse than that denounced upon Jerusalem—"the one taken and the other left"—of our poor Lake-people none were left. The late explorers of these mysteries came, at Moosseedorf, upon a marvellous heap of objects of industry, which, by their state and number, crowded over a considerable area, proved that the discoverers were standing on the site of the village manufactory of industrial implements. Professor Troyon showed me many proofs that it was so—pieces of serpentine, half-fashioned and thrown away because they had been broken in the cutting, and rendered unfit for use; split stag's-horn also rejected; and, more affecting still, instruments that were not thrown away because of defect, but were dropped unfinished because of a sudden catastrophe: axes that lay beside the handles, into which time was not given to insert them; poniards yet unsharpened; needles or hair-pins yet unpointed.

He who visits Pompeii is not so much affected by the architecture he finds there, as by the signs of human life that realise the sudden destruction of the city. The woman's crouching form, impressed upon the lava that had filled a cellar, interests the heart more than hundreds of tessellated pavements. The remains fetched up from the subaqueous Pompeii of Switzerland also produce this touching and human effect. They are more than books or oldest parchments wherein to read how race after race of men do verily pass away, according to old Homer's deathless simile, like leaves on trees. Science, too, on such evidences of abrupt conclusions to things, is wonderfully impelled to speculate on the wherefore of these stern closings-up of human periods. It is as if some power had grown tired of a particular creation. Strong relation here to the geology of nature, in which the mintage of preceding eras is found suddenly to cease; the medals, indeed, laid up in the stupendous repositories of a past creation, but the die that stamped them broken for ever, and cast away as a thing of no account. No other wise is it with

the geology of man, with human relics subterranean or subaqueous. In the midst of their full life they were suddenly and utterly destroyed; if not by a volcano or an earthquake that engulphs or overwhelms them, by man's own rage. The excavations of Wroxeter display a people suddenly crushed by some other people. The conquered are gone: the conquerors themselves have passed away. Similarly, the Swiss lakes are now giving up their records of hasty catastrophes, and nations blotted out for ever. But why so sudden? Why so complete these destructions? Here, the doombook is silent and decipherless.

I can only glance at later eras to be read in the contents of Professor Troyon's museum. Arranged with infinite knowledge, this complete collection rises from the age of stone and wood to that of bronze (which composite material, though imperfectly mixed, does, singularly enough, precede any demonstration of simple iron), and so on to periods, still remote, but which, like the Eocene and Pliocene of Geology, are assimilated to our own time by form and material; periods in which the luxury of the precious metals, and the beauty of gems, far from being unknown, were displayed in works of human fancy, then young and vigorous, which modern art but feebly imitates.

There is, however, one group of relics of the ante-Roman period, evidences of an event that probably occurred two centuries before Christ, which I cannot pass over in silence, since these evidences contrast most strikingly with any revelations that we obtain of the harmless, childish, and in all respects—except the poniards—peaceful people of the Lakes.

The time had grown warlike: as the bronze spear-heads and swords demonstrate. The human beings had grown larger: I could almost insinuate my hand into the inflexible bronze circle without a clasp, which was called a woman's bracelet, while a woman's bronze girdle, with clasp, gave no wasp-like idea of the women's waists of the period. Society had left the lakes, as too tame, in order to dwell in the hills and forests: living, to construct bloody altars; dying, to be burnt and potted in tumuli. The relics I was now surveying came from a tumulus opened some years ago, under the direction of Professor Troyon, of course in a forest, on a hill. The hill and the forest are about five miles inland from Lausanne. The relics are three earthen pots which are filled with a calcined-looking stuff; then, sundry small bones of animals; then a number of warlike implements, and a still greater number of female ornaments, consisting of glass-bead necklaces and bracelets, that have an Egyptian character, and a very curious appendage, like a little bronze cage with a round white stone loose in it—a child's rattle, in fact.

These objects were found in the following order: Lowest were the earthen pots that held all which had once been a hero, or heroes.

Above these, came a vast assemblage of bones, supposed to be those of the warrior's favourite animals, which were slain in order that they might accompany him into Hades. At the summit of the tumulus—crowning the terrible interest—were four skeletons of females, supposed to be the warrior's four wives, also sent after him to Hades.

Concentrating the interest, I take the professor's account of the uppermost skeleton. It was that of a young female, in an attitude of supplication and wild agony. The knees were bent, as if she had implored for life; the arms were cast on high, as if in frantic deprecation of her fate. She had evidently been tossed upon the top of the pile, and her limbs yet retained the very posture in which she died. Then earth and stones had been thrown hastily over the corpse, to crush out the remains of life, if any remains of life there were. A large stone had shattered one of her feet; another lay across her arm, the bone of which it had broken.

"Was she stoned to death?" I asked. "No," replied the professor: "she was probably slaughtered at a stone-altar, which was close to the tumulus, and in which the customary blood-basins of the heathen are still to be seen in situ—for, the altar, as we had others of the same kind, we did not remove from its place. Besides, it was the wish of the owner of the wood that the relic should remain on his property."

"Did you preserve the skeleton?"

"I could not. It fell into a thousand pieces in being removed from the pile. But here is the young creature's skull; and you see by the teeth (magnificent are they not?) that the poor thing was young."

I was struck by the preservation of the small and perfect teeth; and moreover by the fact that the skull was beautifully and intellectually formed.

"Ay!" said the professor, "it was an affecting sight to see that skeleton uncovered, telling its own poor history of two thousand years ago! Several ladies, who were present at the exhumation (the whole search into the tumulus took four days; and, as it excited great interest, was attended by many people), shed tears as they looked at the remains."

I felt how possible it was, even for a man, to have wept at such a drama; and the thought occurred to me, "Eras do not always rise to better things! The poor gentle savages on their artificial islets would not have done the deed which the nation of the forest, capable as it was of higher arts, arms, and manufactures, so fanatically perpetrated. Was there ever a priest upon the tethered rafts of the Lakers? We find no trace of him! But here was evidently a grand Sacrificator, and an unexceptionable Altar. Blessed be the Faith which has overturned every sacrificial altar save that of the loving heart!"

Here, according to all the laws of climax, I should end; but I cannot help throwing out

one hint in parting to the antiquarian explorers of my own country:

"Look well into the British Lakes."

#### HYSTERIA AND DEVOTION.

To whichever page of history we turn, we find a family likeness in all the mental manifestations of the human family. The same physiological phenomena appear generation after generation, century after century, and no matter under what form of faith—Pagan or Christian, Jew, Turk, or Infidel. In the wild excitement of the Dancing Dervish we recognise the same spirit as that which led the Flagellant to bare his back to the lash, and walk through the market-place with the red blood streaming from shoulder to heel; and in the Assassin of the Mountains, who rushes into Paradise mad with hachshish and fanaticism, we see the twin brother of him who storms the gates of the Christian grave in the distinct belief of saintly direction. It is all the same thing, the same cause, with a slight variation in the manner only, of the result. One belief or mental condition we find under every dispensation, and that is the belief in extraordinary religious experiences and extraordinary religious revelations. Prophets and oracles, ghost-seers and visionaries, wonder-workers and miracle-mongers, troop in crowds through the pages of history, and the modern world is beset by the same, with nothing changed but dress and name—brodelcloth and tweeds in lieu of padusoy suits and linen ephods; table-turnings, spirit-rappings, and revivals, in the place of witchcraft, communion with angels, the gift of prophecy, and the power of God.

Moral epidemics are as catching as fevers, and creeds and experiences come into fashion after their due seed-time of neglect and derision. But the most singular thing is, the persistence with which people call a certain physiological condition by high religious names, though they have branded that same condition as devil's work or imposture when manifested outside the pale of their special church. The Convulsionnaires, who writhed, and foamed, and beat their heads against stone walls, and flung themselves into cataleptic fits before the tomb of the Archdeacon Paris, were quite convinced that catalepsy was a divine condition, and that the great mysteries of Heaven were best revealed by strong hysterics. The nuns of Loudun, who had gone through the same experiences before them, were equally sure that their state was due to witchcraft and the devil. Urban Grandier had bewitched them; and the handsome, clever, dissolute priest had to pay with his life the penalty attached in those days to the hysterical mania of unmarried young women. The whole story of the bewitched everywhere is only a diary of catalepsy or epilepsy, hysteria or scrofula, with a great deal of ignorance and superstition superadded. These are truly and literally the tap roots of all the supernaturalism extant. This supernaturalism, this divine afflatus and influence, is still more

marked in the East than in the West. We Saxons have never come up to the feats of the Swinging Fakirs, to the self-inflicted tortures of the Sûnyâsis, to the marvellous power of temporary annihilation of the Absorbed. Just as our jugglery is less esoteric and more cumbersome than theirs, so is our nervous organisation less intense. Yet, indeed, no Eastern devotee ever attempted a greater marvel than did that American lady-medium not so long ago, when she underwent all the pains and throes of maternity to give human life and human intelligence to a certain motive machine, a thing of chains and springs and pulleys, which were to be vivified by her into a new saviour of mankind. No Sûnyâsi would have dreamed of such a conjunction of hysteria and mechanics. The Easterns are beyond us chiefly in the biological effects common under the name of spirit rappings and spirit communications. If one of our miracle men can make me hear music and singing from the four corners of the ceiling, and when the only instrument in the room is an old worn out guitar that apparently plays itself and sings to its own accompaniment; if he can call up spirits from the grave, and tell me the secrets of the other life, finish Byron's unfinished poems, and round off Plato's fragmentary philosophy; the Eastern wizards can do quite as much, and with a less expenditure of vital forces. A Hindoo burglar, well up in his trade, can "hold the eyes" of the inmates of the house he enters, so that they shall not be able to see door or weapon, though they well know where both stand, and in half an hour, when they are not wanted, will find them all close at hand; and the power of the evil eye is by no means scoffed at, even by English ladies of sense and education, when crafty old hags sit cross-legged at the gate, yelling and cursing from sunrise to sundown, and the child falls mysteriously ill the next day. The witches of Huntingdonshire, of Auldearne, Salem, and the Bloekula, did no more; the bewitched did no less; and both East and West must mingle together in the smoke that issues from the bubbling caldron, and in the magic circle round the footsteps of the enchanter.

But hysteria sometimes assumes other forms, and leaves off necromancy and intercourse with spirits to take to sudden conversion and orthodox godliness. Yet even here the East again runs before us, holding the torch to show the way. The excitement of the Marabout, the rapture of the Absorbed, the fervour of the Assassin, the gloomy fanaticism of the Thug, when he dedicates body, soul, and life to Divê; and, earlier still, the initiated into the greater mysteries of Eleusis, the visitor to the Cave of Trophonius, the wild Momads crying, "Bacche! Bacche! Evox! Evox!" all offer examples of sudden conversion from a worldly to a religious life, as genuine as those which took place on the Mourners' Seat in the Backwoods Revivals, or as those now convulsing Belfast and the north of Ireland with hysteric groans. The physiological condition was the same: the only difference was in the name given to it. We would speak slight-



ingly of no human creed. We would cast no doubt or scorn on even the wildness of sincerity, or sneer at the most fantastic forms of faith; but we would call things by their right names—at least by such names as seem to our reason and experience to be right; and when we see a group of howling hysterical people, we must altogether decline to say that they are divinely possessed, or specially gifted with superior gifts. They are in a state of high nervous excitement, in an abnormal physical condition altogether; but we do not take that to be a miracle, or the sign of God's direct dealing with them, no more than we take madness to be a sign of special grace—which yet was a doctrine held by many wise men under the Cæsars, and is still devoutly believed by many ignorant people of our own day behind the Swiss mountains.

The Revivals in Ireland seem to be nowise different to the Convulsionary movement or to the Eastern excesses spoken of before; they seem to be nothing more or less than a special direction of what may be called epidemic hysteria. They present all the features of hysteria, just as the American Revivals did, years ago. But the symptoms are modified—the disease is evidently not so severe. There has been nothing yet like the experiences of Peter Cartwright, the brawny Backwoods preacher, who struck down men and women by hundreds in his monster camp meetings, and for every case of mental disease counted a soul snatched from sin to grace. Under his powerful preaching, modest young women, flushed and dishevelled, like so many Bacchantes, drunk with preaching instead of wine, went leaping and shouting over the camp, crying, "Glory! Glory!" till they made the old brown woods ring again; strong men yelled and foamed and fainted under the excess of their terrors and the heavy conviction of sin; and dissolute young "rowdies," who had gone to scoff, got caught in their own toils, and fell before the altar, bellowing for pardon and mercy before the prayer for sinners came to an end. The Irish Revivals are considerably milder than their pattern; but they are none the less diseased manifestations because the disease is not so virulent. They have had their groups of grovelling sinners howling, "Glory," and "Pardon," "Jesus," and "Amen," as the preacher bade; and there have been some so powerfully affected as to call forth the most enthusiastic delight from watching and believing Evangelical ministers;—for the more excitable the nervous organisation the nearer to grace and holiness. But, though the Irish preachers have failed to produce the mighty effects common to Peter Cartwright's ministry, they have had the gift of working miracles; or, rather, the Revival has been accompanied by miracles. The Daily News of the 19th of September, quoting the North British Mail, gives the following story:

"A REVIVALIST MIRACLE.—We have just seen a letter from a father in Moyse, two miles from the town of Newton-Limavady, to his son in Greenock, in which, speaking of the revivals in that district,

he says: 'We had the pleasure of hearing two young converts address an assembly at different times since you went away. They were both Papists before they were converted, but are now true Catholics, being brought to the knowledge of the truth. One of them was dumb all his days until stricken down the second time, and the love of God was shed abroad in his heart so very much that he prayed that the Lord might open his mouth and let loose his tongue, that he might tell others what God had done for his soul. From that time God heard him, and did open his mouth, and he can now speak as plain as any man, and it is only five months since he was stricken down, and he is now able to read a little; but he has a very great many portions of Scripture that he can repeat, that he has learned by hearing since that time; and he can address an assembly middling well. Up to his being stricken down no one ever knew a word he said, not even his own people, who held communication with him by signs.'"

Others have had signs and symbols printed on their breasts; many have borne about them the sacred name of "Geasus" written by the agency of the Holy Spirit; which, however, resolved itself into a darning-needle and the blue-bag, combined with a daring contempt of ordinary orthography; and some have had blood stains and wounds on their hands and feet. Others have had miraculous visions; and one "good woman," quoted by Dr. M'Cosh, had certain spiritual doubts and fears which a lonely female figure came to relieve. But the figure "was far too like the Virgin to comport with the ideas of a Protestant," says Dr. M'Cosh. Some have been struck blind and deaf, and many have gone crazed—which is by far the most natural termination of the movement. Of the general willingness to believe supernaturalism in the most natural thing whatsoever, the following anecdote is a convincing proof: A young woman was crying very earnestly for mercy, when a lad, seeing a flash of light on the window, cried out, "She will get peace now. I see the light!" The others caught up and echoed the cry; and though the candle which had caused that sudden flash came in sight, they were hardly to be convinced that they had not seen a supernatural sign of God's gracious acceptance of this woman's soul! Yet if these nervous feelings run into any of the ordinary mesmeric phenomena, the ministers then put them down as of Satan, not of God. Hysteria is divine; but, hysteria manifested as somnambulism or as mesmerism is simply devilish.

This movement is not confined to the poor only. Certainly the poor and ignorant have borne the largest share in it; and the more poor and the more ignorant they are, the larger has been their share. The sequence is logical enough. But they are not quite isolated. Dr. M'Cosh says, "It is not to be forgotten that not a few of the educated classes have felt the power of this movement. I have heard of between twelve and twenty students who have experienced a spiritual change during the past summer. One young gentleman, who moves in a genteel circle, and who has himself, I believe, been savingly impressed, told me a few weeks ago that he knew of upwards of twenty persons, young gentlemen



and ladies, among his acquaintance in Belfast, who were seriously inquiring after salvation." A gentleman of some property, "connected with the liquor traffic," and owner of several public-houses in Newcastle, was so impressed, during a Revivalist meeting held there, that he declared in full congregation his intention of giving up all connexion with this said liquor traffic, and of living in the ways of teetotalism for the future. The meeting was taken by storm, and the declaration "impressed many powerfully." Much stress has been laid by the Revivalists, and those of the Evangelical Alliance favourable to its excesses, on the decrease of drunkenness, and the increase of good works and practical piety among the converted; or, as the phrase goes, "those who have got religion." One clergyman gives us quite a picture of a Christian Arcadia:

"The moral change in the Protestant population seems to keep pace with the religious movement. Drunkenness has almost entirely disappeared from among them. I understand that the collector of revenue in one district—not a very large one—has stated that the consumption of spirits within his boundary has fallen off at the rate of 600*l.* per month. The testimony of all whom I met was to the same effect. Rioting and ill-conduct in the small towns have also passed away. I myself visited one evening, after dark, the public-houses of a once very drunken town, and found them empty of customers. Quietness and peace have entered into neighbourhoods which before were torn by party strife. A gentleman who is in the habit of examining witnesses in the sessions' courts told me of the great change which he observed in the manner of taking an oath, and the cautious way in which testimony is now given lest anything should be stated amiss. A friend observed to me that even petty thefts of fruit from orchards and gardens, which he used to be aware of, are now not known; and the churchwardens of a parish church have remarked poor people, whom they never knew to contribute before, now dropping their pence and halfpence into the alms-box."

Another speaks of congregations of ministers of all denominations—Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Independents, Methodists, Baptists, and Romanists, meeting in paternal love and Christian union, reading, and praying, and singing praises together. Another clergyman, "a man of sound judgment," speaks of the peace and quiet of Sandy-row, the former scene of riot and mischief, but where now "the policemen say there is no drunkenness or trouble of any kind." "A driver of the car yesterday said that in one place in the country he had seen people fall down thirty at a time, crying for mercy. 'What did he think it was?' 'Why sure it must be the works of the Almighty! The Catholics say it's the work of the devil, but I always tell them, Would the devil teach people to pray?'" Mr. Sewell says that "even Romanists are standing in awe, and that many have professed conversion; that there is no drunkenness, and no work doing at the police courts." The Rev. B. Trench says that a solicitor told him litigation had ceased; a publican, that no man could live by that trade; lost women were fast

disappearing—"they had cried to Jesus for mercy;" the savings banks' deposits had greatly increased, which at least shows commendable thrift in the saints; political feeling was dead; quarrelling at an end; one editor of a public newspaper "has been entirely incapacitated from collecting his thoughts on any other subject;" and "compositors in a printing-office have been unable, through strong feelings of sin and bodily weakness, to go on with their ordinary work." Others assert "the most entire change in the manners and morals of the people;" the general habit of family worship and the discontinuance of swearing and profane language; the extinction of religious feuds, the abolition of sectarian differences, and the rolling of the full flood of harmony, peace, and goodwill. Unfortunately, those fatal figures—those unenthusiastic, disbelieving, obstinate statistics—come to destroy all these beautiful assertions. In the four months immediately preceding the Revivals—from January to April, inclusive—there was a falling off of one hundred and twenty-nine in the number of persons committed for crime (chiefly for being "drunk and disorderly") as compared with the four corresponding months of the previous year. From May, when the Revivals began, to August, the excess of persons so committed was no fewer than four hundred and eighty-two, compared with the four corresponding months in eighteen hundred and fifty-eight. Thus, we have indubitable evidence that there was less crime when there were no Revivals, no Christian Arcadia, no miracles, and no hysteria, but just the usual plodding, everyday virtues which attempted nothing supernatural, and were content with simple duty, than there was when people were foaming at the mouth as they yelled for grace and mercy—grovelling by scores in the dust and mud at the feet of ignorant fanatics dealing largely in universal damnation, and the impossibility of the non-Revivalist to be saved. The most immoral scenes take place on Sunday nights; precisely on those very nights when the preaching is wildest, loudest, most excited. Fifty persons and more have generally, on Monday mornings, to answer to the Belfast magistrates for their offences of the Sabbath evening previous. And, indeed, this is only the unanswerable logic of human nature, which always makes a more turbulent outfall for itself in proportion to the strictness of the barrier it overleaps; and which, when thoroughly moved and excited—no matter how in the beginning—turns to excess and immorality as the best relief known to the passionate and ignorant.

It is gratifying, though, to know that all pious men are not the dupes of the physiological phenomena sought to be ranked as divine gifts. Clergymen in the revival district, have written their strong and sorrowful protest against the whole movement. One, who has met with much contumely and scorn because of his want of faith, speaks of the total want of any real reformation among the "struck." They speak more nasally, often quote the Scriptures, see

visions, read their names in the "Lamb's Book of Life"—but not that of their unbelieving pastor—and have revelations by the score. But they are not a whit better in outside morals, and a vast deal worse inwardly, if spiritual pride, uncharitableness, and self-conceit be things to be ranked as moral deteriorations. Another clergyman, who has been much engaged among the Revivalists, and who writes his experiences, takes no more cheerful tone. He says, boldly, that the more marked the hysterical phenomena, the more generally immoral is the life; that "many of the subjects of the delusion are worse than they were before, if spiritual pride and arrogance, self-righteousness, and a disposition to prefer their own inspirations to the teaching of the Bible, are symptoms;" that "a diseased state of mind, has, in some cases, been induced, which threatens to become chronic; that instances of insanity are by no means rare, and homes, once happy and industrious, have presented scenes at which any Christian heart would ache." This same clergyman also speaks of the "bitter persecution" manifested in Ulster against all who do not believe in the divine origin and direction of this movement, and distinctly asserts that, "almost without exception," the Revival has not produced one instance of actual, open, undeniable "newness of life." A medical man, with all his medical skill and knowledge engrafted on to a very decided Christian faith, advocates the dashing of cold water into the faces of the "struck." Cold water has always been the best corrective of hysteria; and the old monks were right when they made it one of their means of exorcising the devil out of the unclean. "Hysteria is an accident, like a flood of tears," says this M.D., writing to the Daily News of the nineteenth of September; "it has nothing to do with the truth or not of the religious emotions, which can only be judged of by its merits in improved conduct. The hysteria should be firmly and sternly discountenanced as a morbid symptom, and one very capable of spreading by imitation. Cold water dashed upon the face, so as to wet the hair and clothes, and to make the hysterical person as uncomfortable as possible, with the sotto voce announcement to send for large scissors to cut off the female's hair, or a razor to shave the effeminate man's beard, would, if resolutely adopted by a resolute man, determined to conquer the hysteria, put a stop to it in the persons affected, and on those around liable to be affected by imitation."

It seems to us that this M.D.'s advice is the soundest practical good sense. It is a pity there is no one with sufficiently large will to try its effect in Belfast. Every one knows how very infectious nervous diseases are. Madness may be caught literally like small-pox; and one hysterical girl in a community is sure to be countenanced by half a dozen companions. A boy was whipped not long ago at a school, and fell into nervous convulsions; immediately there was a succession of small boys in convulsions, falling into that state from sympathy and imitation, not very un-

like what the Revivalists do in Ulster. The worst mischief is in the spread of these religious manias. Wales is becoming affected now, and the Times of October the eighth gives the following account of how they are proceeding there:

"REVIVALS IN WALES.—Simultaneously with the outbreak of Revivals in Ireland, religious meetings on a large scale were held in various parts of the principality, and the movement has since been making considerable progress. The effects produced on those who attend these gatherings appear to be similar to those described in the accounts from Ireland. Some fall to the ground shrieking and crying, while others indulge in an hour or two of prayer. The addresses of the preachers are fervent and enthusiastic, and the excitement under which they labour is easily communicated to a Welsh audience. At Aberystwith the Revival seemed to be dying out fast, but within the last week or two it has derived fresh strength from quite an unexpected source. A party of militia men are stationed in the town, and they have come to the determination to hold daily prayer meetings. Not satisfied with these 'spiritual exercises,' as they are termed, once a day, the men now assemble every morning before parade and every evening after parade. In Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire the Revivalists say the movement is rapidly gaining ground, and preachers who have been listened to for many years by their congregations with the utmost composure now produce an extraordinary effect. No attempt, however, has yet been made to show that crime has decreased in consequence of this change. The inhabitants of the border counties have not been much affected by the Revivals at present, although a clergyman of the Church of England preached on the subject a fortnight ago at Newport, Monmouthshire, and expressed a hope that the 'good work' would extend to his own town and his own congregation. At Tredegar, however, a revival of temperance has occurred, and this, it is said, is the forerunner of the conversion of many. An itinerant cutler has induced three thousand persons in this place alone to sign the pledge, and subscriptions to the amount of two thousand pounds have been received towards building a new temperance hall. This is a large sum of money, the fact being taken into consideration that a large proportion of those who have given it are miners. In no part of Wales have phenomena similar to those reported to have occurred in Ireland been witnessed—no one has had 'revelations,' nor have any symbols been stamped on the persons of the Revivalists. The meetings, however, have occasionally been vast, and hundreds are unable to get near enough to the preacher to hear a word of his address. Prayer meetings are daily held in numerous places, and supplications offered for the spread of the Revival."

Nothing is more melancholy than to see the greedy eagerness with which any abnormal physical condition whatever is caught up as food for superstition, and as evidence of a supernatural dispensation. We know so little of what is really natural, that surely it is simply presumption to say that anything not quite easily accounted for by our present knowledge is, therefore, outside the healthy laws of nature, and only to be explained by reference to direct miracle. God does not deal by partial laws, still less by capricious movements and temporary and local revelations. And, indeed, the Revivalists get themselves in-

volved in a terrible labyrinth if they assert the divine origin of hysteria in one place; for if so, what about the others? What about the frantic Assassin, the Dervish who falls as if dead after his mad religious exercises? What about the Convulsionnaires, the Bewitched, the earlier disciples of mesmerism, the medium, who attempts to give real birth, or life, to a wooden man, with clockwork inside? What about Johanna Southcote, Irving and his tongues, Thom, the second advent, or the ordinary religious maniac in the asylums? If hysteria and nervous excitement are to go as divine conditions in one place, and under one name, so must they in another.

The Irish Revivals, like the American, do not differ one hair-breadth in origin from all the other phenomena and manifestations that fill the pages of history. The pythones, and the young American girl who leaped over the camp with streaming hair and frantic gestures, the Irish men and women now foaming in Belfast, the Eastern devotees, the Revivalists, the Convulsionnaires, and the hysterically Bewitched, are all of one birth and one cause. The moving power with each was, and is, Disease combined with Ignorance; hysteria, nervous excitement, weak intellect, and superstition, having to answer for all the supernaturalism and divine influence supposed to exist. We say this sorrowfully and tenderly; not irreverently nor scornfully of any human creature's faith, but in the cause of truth, and as believers in the wholeness and wholesomeness of nature and humanity.

#### MOLOCH'S CHAPEL OF EASE.

How comes it that we pass and repass that heavy yellow building in the very heart of Brunensberg, which lifts itself in a monstrous massiveness, with a strange fluttering reverence and sense as of an awful mystery? How comes it that when darkness is well set in, and lights glimmer through the trees and in the house-tops, and we come lounging by, those tall windows, all yawning wide open and sending forth a yellow reeking glare, exercise so unholy a fascination on us, and draw us in irresistibly under the huge archway?

Hard to fight with, that mesmeric influence. Resist as we may, we are drawn up that wide spacious stair. For all things here are the broad roads, leading, it may be, to perdition, with not a single narrow gate to inconvenience passengers. Step lightly now, for here is the threshold; and as Moslems doff their slippers at the mosque gate, so must it be with profane hat, coat, or offensive stick. So, sir, hand your rich mantle to the vergers in puce and snuff-brown livery, and let us, with heads reverently bowed, enter Moloch's Chapel of Ease.

Noble and spacious are the halls of Moloch, with springing dome overhead, elaborately wrought, and profusest garnishing after the renaissance pattern. Gilding tips fair all little prominences, and delicate tinting fills in the panelling, reflected many times in spread-

ing mirrors. Moloch's artificers were cunning men, men of taste. Sweetest little cherubs sit up aloft, watching over no poor soul's interest, but busy padding among floating clouds, and giving proper exercise to their little pink proportions.

The air reeks, and is at sick-chamber heat. The sacrifices are going on with a strange energy. From twelve noon until twelve midnight, they will not cease for a minute. The furnace is in full work, the dervishes overtaken more cruelly than starving curates at home.

Hard, very hard, is it to know what manner of worship is Moloch's, for the devotees are crowded together, wedged fast and close together, about his altar. Triple, quadruple rows! over which, by straining desperately, a short glimpse is gained of the long green sacrificial altar, and of the offerings. Moloch, amiable god, does not require living babies for his furnace, only what some of us love better than our babies—only our gold and silver pieces. See the dervishes and the dervish-in-chief, all furnished with their pastoral crooks or rakes, which they manipulate with an infinite skill—see them fenced in densely by that quickset human hedge, that heaving, gasping, fretting, exulting, despairing, human hedge.

Surely never was such piety as this; never do pilgrims in church, struggle so painfully for front places, strain their necks so cruelly to hear and to see, not to lose a word or a form of the great ceremonial. See, the chief dervish is commencing, glancing to the right and to the left, and turning languidly that glittering four armed instrument before him. Whir-r-r! The ball is gone from his sacred fingers; is spinning round in its channel with a low burr. Precious moments, holy seconds for the human hedge. Whence shoot forth suddenly a legion of stretched arms, lunging desperately at the cabalistic numbers, dripping gold and silver here, there, everywhere; on the red and on the black, on the odd and on the even, on "pass" or on "fall-short," on "the column," on twelve, the first, or on the fatal make or mar "zero!" But a green sward a second before, it is now sown broadcast with glittering metals. Ball still galloping in its mahogany circus. Hark! It is spent—is dancing and clattering over brass impediments. "Elle ne va plus!" sings chief dervish. (It runs no more.) More dancing, sharp click, and then sudden silence. It has gone home; is at rest in its coloured cell; while panting hearts, flushed cheeks, dewy foreheads, bend over to hear the dervish chant out the result. "Vingt-six!" (twenty-six) sings he, from his cold lungs. "Black has it; so has even; so has pass." And lo! out fly the long feelers or rakes; and, with a strange clatter clatter, sweep in noiselessly a flood of metal. They are the fatal sickles getting in the metallic harvest. With it is raked up hope and happiness, peace and refreshing sleep!

Stray pieces here and there have stood the storm, and lie with a soft complacency on the ground they have conquered. Fondly do their masters regard them from afar, as do racing men



their successful barbs. For them now comes showering down, with heavy thud-thud, metallic hailstones, aimed with a strange precision at these happy survivors. Huge silver pieces are spouting in a shower from the dervish's hand, held high. One little yellow disc sleeps peacefully on the magic winning number, vingt-six. Another yellow disc, one half as fortunate, but still blessed, is taking horse exercise on twenty-six, and another number is à cheval, as the phrase runs. A third is miraculously astride on six bare-backed steeds, of which happy twenty-six is one. But they are all happy, more or less; only the little original disc which has twenty-six all to himself is terque quaterque felix! For him is being heaped up privately two dainty columns of other yellow discs, to be gently propelled over by the long fin of the dervish. A lean, heated face, with ragged hair plumage, breaks out of the human hedge; a lean, wasted, and much discoloured claw clutches at the little columns with a horrid greed. Attention! Hush!

The game is being made again; metallic sowing-time comes round again; the ball is once more coursing round its mahogany circus; and so are the sickening "scenes in the circle" repeated over and over again, and with a never failing popularity.

In that other chamber hard by, under swimming Cupids too, goes forward another shape of ritual; but to the same divinity. His furnace is alight there too. Here it is chanted out of a Talmud, or Koran, or Mormon book written in black and red characters, bound and lettered on the back "Rouge et Noir." A sober and decent congregation sitting tranquilly in their chairs; no lunging, no violent stretching of arms, but each busy with his book of Hours, read—curious to say—with a long pin. This is a chapel for persons of quality: only substantial holocausts are laid down upon the altar. And there in the centre, high heaped and glittering, is that banquet of specie; layers of bank curl-papers, tureens running over with gold drops, long fat sausage-rolls of silver, all prepared for such as truly love and serve the great divinity, Moloch. Prayer-books are to be seen, lying on the ground well thumbed, and punctured all over with pin-holes; which apparent profanity is but these poor folks' manner of prayer. So many pin-holes, so much devout ejaculation. That young man with the florid face and straw-coloured whiskers, and who is, as it were, washing his fingers in a golden heap, has used a bushel of such cards. About him there is a legend afloat; as, indeed, there is about most persons in that chapel. He is a sea-captain newly paid off, and he came here, flush of prize-money, and of that good-natured milk which mixes in the blood of many sea-captains. Boldly he faced Moloch; and five hundred of that god's golden pieces flowed into his pocket. Business then took him home; but within a week he was back again, swearing with sea-captains' oaths to beard Moloch still further. Since which fatal day, the golden current has flowed steadily from him, until it has left him

washing his fingers in that last heap, and doubtful whether to go on, or in his own phrase "belay!" Belay, indeed, he had best, while there is yet time. That small heap is all that remains to him; Moloch has long since gotten back his own, as, indeed, he usually does. Dervishes with canonicals off, and when they have relapsed into private life, whisper to us, rubbing their fingers, that they deem all won money only so much lent money, to be carried awhile in the pocket; but to be rendered back eventually with a terrible interest. There are legends concerning even the dervishes, certain of whom, sallow, careworn men, are pointed at as having once possessed fortunes of their own, long since prayed (or played) away to the last franc, on Moloch's altar; and the legends say that the king has generously turned them into his priests, and now generously allows them eighteen francs a day for their service. Legend, too, concerning the pale-cheeked Parisian lady, with her little girl, who is moving so restlessly from room to room, from window to window, and taking secret and wistful glances over at the altar. Her husband is playing, praying there—a mere boy and petit-maitre—married for his looks. The legend runs, that the Parisian lady, married for her ingots, had come down by herself, leaving the boy-husband at home; had met with a frightful tempest of ill-luck; had lost of her ingots one thousand pounds sterling; and had now set the boy-husband to strive if he could not fight it back for her. The little girl clinging to her skirt knows not that it is her portion now balancing on a point—the point of Pin! Madame cannot contain herself longer, and is bending over, nervously asking for news—good news. A toss and a shrug, and display of open palms, is sufficient answer. A key from madame's neck is put into the child's little hand, and she is presently skipping homeward, bound for mamma's private desk, quite proud and joyful. This legend will see its end to-night.

There is a square, shock-haired head, long estranged from comb or brush exercise, with a face dull and wooden, and laid down on Kalmuck lines. That Tartar face never lifts its eye from the green, knows no distraction all day or all night long, he plays and prays on "a system," steadily, unswervingly, and with fatal sacrifices. Moloch chuckles with delight when he sees his followers taking to "systems." The road to his kingdom is paved—not with good intentions, but with systems. Unflinchingly he doubles his moneys when beaten, and tries that long game with Moloch.

There is a terrible old lady, past all other enjoyment, playing fiercely, and with an earnestness truly diabolic. She sits beside a dervish, for convenience, and has a private rake all to herself, which she flourishes as a witch does her professional crooked-top stick, and yet her gold is leaving her surely. Her notes are being steadily transmuted in the alchemist's pot, and, by a process truly beautiful, see the specie trickling like a golden rill from the cunning fingers of the dervish, to be clutched by her



palsied hands and temporarily made use of, but sure to trickle back again into the furnace. Fearful witch! Withdraw, and cease to struggle with Destiny!

Music on the right!—a clash orchestral breaking in for an instant and cut off prematurely. It is but a door opened and closed again. Here is a grand transformation scene. A wave of the wand, and the daintily coloured walls open, and the mirrors and pink Cupids are wheeled away to the right and to the left, disclosing the fairy ball-room and transformation scene, its white and gold pillars, its yellow effulgence from long lines of chandeliers and gallant company of dark-robed sprites and elves—elves in gossamer robes and flowering wreaths—all flying round to that wild saltarello, the Valse Mephistopheles! Appropriate music! Chief of orchestra—black, vivacious spirit, recalling strangely the likeness of that celebrated familiar—is bounding on his men of music furiously. Clash from Eastern cymbals, with fiercest racing of fiddle notes, and round sweep the wretched company! Inspiring Valse Mephistopheles! These are Moloch's own musicians, playing for Moloch's own congregation; and a sort of embodiment of that great divinity himself—a huge white heathen god carrying off a young lady who, in point of dress, is only too classical—strides out of the wall at one side, and overlooks the whole ceremonial. He is not singular in his pastime, for are there not below him fifty stout Romans, in evening coats, struggling to all appearance with fifty young Sabines, in the grand Mephistopheles Valse? Grand round, once more, to Saracenic clash!

To that restless group hovering on the edge—looking on, but more frequently looking backward—the business seems sickly and insipid enough. Their hearts are fluttering on the edge of the great abyss of chance—chink of metal is their true dancing music—and so, after coming up in that corner, skirting that group, like disturbed spirits, they glide away back to those enchanting realms where their home is.

Here are calm and softly shaded lights, a decent tranquillity, and ruin on gentlemanly principles back again! The dervishes reading their service in the “most impressive manner,” garnering up the offerings of their faithful in the steadiest fashion. Again the solemn Gregorian chant strikes upon the ear. “Rouge gagne et couleur!” Again the clink and shuffle of metals raked home form agreeable musical accompaniment. Only, as it begins to touch on midnight, a sort of “revival” sets in, and worshippers grow fiercer and more importunate in their prayers, singing, “Hear us, Baal!” frantically. The terrible old woman is still there, madly flourishing her rake, but there is nothing else left for her to flourish. So her wicked old face can only follow, in spirit, the retreating moneys; and her wicked old fingers beat the table nervously at every successful coup. With square Shock-head things have gone as ill. Moloch has beaten him, and, what is more cruel still,

his system! So he too may go and sit gnawing his fingers until he is weary; and then, pushing his chair back, may retire, going down with his system into Hades! Watchful familiars shall dust his place clean, and set a neat fresh card, with pin, ready for the next comer.

But our poor florid hay-whiskered sea-captain, with his soft schoolboy nature, how has it been with him and his dwindling heap? A clean void before him. All gone.

The night's service is over; and, standing in the open street, out under the cool night air, we see the wretched penitents, with flustered faces and heavy gait, debouch from that yawning archway; above, the row of smelting furnace doors still open, emitting a hot sultry blast. Whoever would now trip up-stairs lightly, and cautiously drawing aside the muslin curtain, peep into Moloch's chapel, would see the closing ceremonial of this day's worship: Lights half down, upper atmosphere lost in black shadows, and the whole company sitting about the table, counting the spoils—a genuine Rembrandtish effect; faces bending forward, and lighted up with a lurid red; gaunt figures cast upon the wall behind them. Some, busy with dull flickering candles, sealing up gold in rouleaux; others, packing it away in brass-bound coffers; all intent upon their task. Familiars of Moloch! you will not be sorry, when that mysterious taking of stock is accomplished, to stand up, stretching your limbs, and wander homeward to your lonely lodgings.

#### THE POSTMASTER'S DAUGHTER.

LATE on the night after my return from France, where I had been living for seven years, my father and youngest sister had left Anna and me alone. We were in a half confidential, half reserved mood, sounding one another's hearts, with fond words shyly spoken, and close questions shyly asked. We sat in a glimmer of fire-light on the old kitchen hearth, where we had played together in our childhood. The low rocking-chair I occupied, the white wooden cricket on which Anna sat beside me, the large painted cupboard, the scoured dresser, the bright pewter plate-covers, and the blue check curtains drawn across the window, were exactly as I had left them. Only everything in the house seemed smaller, dingier, older: it was home; yet not altogether the home my memory had pictured it in the sunny south of France. I could not utter the ill-defined disappointment that I felt in spite of my great joy, and, falling into the silence which is the language of a full heart, I tried to recal my home as it was when I left it.

The home of a tradesman in straitened circumstances: straitened, not by ill-conduct or self-indulgence, but by devotion to study, elegant tastes, and thoughtless liberality. Ours was a poverty to be almost proud of; but it weighed heavily upon our young hearts; deprived, as we were, of maternal or brotherly companionship and aid. Although scarcely able to enter into the intri-

cate details of a neglected business, I remembered the daily warping cares, the petty economies in housekeeping, and the harassment of perpetual claims upon our forethought and energy. My father was a stationer and postmaster in the town of Tonwell; and, upon my twin-sister Anna and myself, now devolved the chief management of both concerns. At that time our townsmen were not a reading or a writing people, and the work was not too much for us; but the perplexities arising from our ignorance of the world, and the want of that sanguine confidence with which young men encounter cares and responsibilities, had been the burden which had worn out the elasticity of our spirits, and sent me from the precarious resources of home to seek a more certain profit in the occupation of an English governess in a family resident abroad. Our youngest sister, Ettie, nine years our junior, had been well educated by the result of my efforts. I, now six-and-twenty, had returned to take once more a share in the greatly increased duties of the post-office.

All the day my father and sisters had been unconsciously comparing me with my former self, and I had watched them furtively, seeking to determine what alterations time had wrought. My father had become a bowed-down, hoary-headed old man, fitted only for a comfortable retirement, but, in reality, more engaged in business than during the prime of his life, soon wearied with the unwonted exertions required by his official post. Ettie had grown up into a lively and beautiful girl of seventeen, amiable, impulsive, and passionately attached to our father; all whose opinions she revered unquestioningly, and to whose indulgent fondness she had been accustomed to appeal against Anna's decisions. But I silently noted the greatest change in my twin-sister. As she sat quietly beside me, her thick hair pushed back from her face, I saw, with sorrow, that her cheeks and lips were pale; her clear grey eyes, that used to wear a look of quiet hopefulness, were dimmed and careworn, and her mouth did not relax so quickly into smiles as in days of old. She had an air of languor and unquietness.

"It is not worth while killing one's self to get a living," I said, gently stroking her wavy hair.

"I shall not kill myself now," she answered, smiling sadly. "I think I should, if you had not come home; for I cannot help worrying a little, now and then, about business. I have not half the influence over my father that you will have. He will think you know more of the world than I know, because you have been abroad, and I have only looked at it through the post-office window."

"Not a very good place for observation," I remarked.

"Not at all, if you wish to keep friends with it," Anna said. "The public are not always civil teachers. But I am not thinking of that just now. I must give you some idea of how my father goes on. We are getting more and more into debt every week. He orders nothing

for the shop but patent medicines and books from the Tract Society. We have pills of every description in such abundance, that, if all known and unknown diseases attacked the townspeople, we could supply specifics for each. As for religious books, the house is crammed with them, and very few persons care to buy them, except to give away, or the clergymen and ministers, who never pay for some months, and then want discount. Of course, the old publishing firms with whom my father used to do business send in their unpaid accounts, and we have no means of meeting them."

"I thought my last remittances would have helped you a little," I said.

"It was like a drop in a bucket," she replied; "still, I intended to pay two or three little bills in the town with it. But I am so sorry—my father is good, and kind, and clever, and a father to respect and reverence in many things. Everybody thinks highly of him; but he has not an atom of worldly forethought or prudence, and the last ten pounds you sent, he gave towards building a day-school connected with his chapel. I did not know it till I saw it on the subscription list, and, when I expostulated with him, he said there would be a blessing upon it, and he trusted to Providence to meet a bill that was to fall due the next week. I had to be the Providence, and borrow the money wherever I could. I am afraid you will blame me, Mary, but I have quite left off going to chapel with my father and Ettie, partly because he gives more than we can afford at collections, and it made me feel angry to see it. I go to church now."

"Church or chapel is all the same to me," I replied.

"I am afraid going abroad has made you a latitudinarian," she said, anxiously.

"We won't have any theology to-night," I answered, kissing her grave face; "tell me about the office work."

"It is altogether altered," she said, with an oppressed, careworn look; "you remember our work used to be over at six in the evening, when the ostler from the Eagle came on horseback to take our seven or eight little letter-bags to meet the mail-coach on the London road; but, as soon as the railway was finished, the trade of Tonwell increased wonderfully, and now a great number of letters are received and despatched here—an average of thirty thousand a week passes through our office; during each day fifty bags come in, and the same number of course go out; all the colliery and iron-works in the neighbourhood are put into our district, and thirty rural offices are under ours, and require my father's occasional inspection; we have to look sharply after them."

"What are the times for the arrival and departure of the mails?" I asked.

"I will tell you briefly," she answered, "but you will learn them soon enough by practice. There is, first, the great morning mail, which comes in at three in the morning. Then our own bags for the sub-offices have to be made up

and despatched, which occupies us till six o'clock. The letter-office must be opened to the public at seven, and the money-order office at ten. At eleven, there is a mail from our county town, and one to be sent to London. We go on all day, until our great nightwork begins, which lasts till after ten, when we send out our greatest number of bags."

"What part does our father take in the work?" I inquired.

"He is more involved in it than he used to be," she replied; "his accounts have to be strictly and punctually attended to; he has all the letters of complaint and inquiry to answer; he is required to inspect the sub-offices, and see that every official performs his duty; in short, he has more than forty persons to superintend and to pay. He is getting a very old man now."

"So the post-office work actually requires three persons to do it?" I asked.

"Two persons could not possibly do it," she replied; "morning, noon, and night its claims require our full attention. I could not manage in the night without the assistance of the town letter-carrier, who brings the bags from the station. This is no part of his duty, but by helping me he is able to get some of the town letters for the lawyers and other people who are willing to pay him, and deliver them before six in the morning; it is an irregularity, of course, but I do not know what I should do if we were forbidden his assistance."

"Well, Anna," I said, after a long pause, and I raised her bowed-down head that I might look keenly into her eyes, "after all this hand-to-hand life, is there any of the woman left in you? Are you not crusted over with misanthropy?"

"Not quite," she answered, smiling; "I have a little love left for you and Ettie and my father. But it is rather a weary thing to be chained to the office-counter all the days of my youth; and it is a very painful thing to sacrifice health and spirits and—"

"Beauty!" I added. "Yet beauty and enjoyment and health are not the chief things a woman cares for. Has there been no time for other thoughts to creep in? No time to fancy yourself in another home, with all your future life lying cheerful and blessed before you?"

"I had such a dream once," she replied, "but it was a vain dream without foundation."

"Tell me all about it," I said.

"I will do so," she answered, "and then we will not speak of it again, for I think girls often waste their time and lower their own delicacy by talking and thinking of young men."

"How much time every day do you think we might lawfully devote to such a subject?" I asked, slyly.

"Well, perhaps ten minutes," she added, with her old honest naïveté; "or, if you are positively engaged, and had to write, half an hour would not be too much. But it seems scarcely modest to talk much of them, even to one's sister."

In the quiet hour after midnight, sitting alone upon the kitchen hearth, with such faint and un-

certain light as tempts us to unreserved confidences, because a dim but not altogether impervious veil shades our tell-tale faces, my twin-sister read to me from the pages of her memory her own version of the old, old story, which constitutes the romance of every woman's life. Seven years before its first words had been syllabled to her, and, with the beautiful reticence of her constant nature, she lingered faithfully over its remembrance, dating all things by it as the sacred era of her history, and enshrining it in her heart as the period of her fullest life.

She said I must easily recollect Stephen Ellesmere, the eldest son of the proud and wealthy Tonwell banker: a handsome, gay, frank boy, who had been our admiration when we were both young girls at school. He returned from college at the age of twenty-three, soon after I left home, with the intention of taking some part in the work of the bank, as a preliminary to becoming a partner. He cared little for business beyond bringing the letters to the post-office daily, and in his free, off-hand manner he had assumed a right of entering the office, instead of delivering them through the window. In Anna's first feeling of loneliness after my departure, he had appeared as one who brought a temporary relief and gaiety; and so it came to pass that they were mutually attracted, he by her quiet, melancholy gentleness, and she by his frank and cordial friendliness. My father was blind to what was going on, and his family could never have imagined such an infatuation on his part.

"It was downright insanity," I exclaimed, "for you and Stephen Ellesmere to care for each other."

"I could not help it," she said, simply. "I will tell you how we came to understand one another. It was one sunny winter's day after Christmas, and I was making mince-pies at this dresser. Ettie had gone out with cousin Rhoda, and as I had the office to mind, I opened the little door between it and the kitchen. It was a pleasant morning, the sparrows were chirping quite blithely on the rookery under the window, and I began singing to myself, so I did not hear Mr. Stephen come in; but, looking round, I saw him standing in the doorway, quietly smiling at me. He asked me to go on with my work, and let him warm himself at my fire, and I did so, while he stood looking on, and telling me of all the grand Christmas parties he had been at. Then he talked some nonsense about mince-pies being nicer if made by a sister or a wife; but I laughed so much at the idea of any one belonging to him condescending to make mince-pies, that he was quite disconcerted and silenced for a few minutes, until I drew some from the oven, and as they were nicely baked I offered him one."

"Anna!" I cried, with feigned indignation.

"I did not mean it, I assure you," she said, vehemently; "I never thought of encouraging him. I scarcely know what Stephen said, but I knew from that moment that he believed he loved me."

"And what did he do?" I asked.



"Why—why, he kissed me!" And Anna, red with shame, hid her face in my lap. "It was very wrong, I know," she continued, after a little while, "but I was not twenty, and it seemed so natural for him to do it. I felt very happy at first, but then I was frightened, because motherless girls cannot be too careful in their conduct. So I said hurriedly, 'I will register your letter now, Mr. Stephen,' and we went into the office; but my hand trembled till I could not hold the pen, and Stephen had to copy the address and wait till I could sign the receipt. 'I have not vexed you, Anna?' he said; 'only say I have not vexed you!' 'Not altogether,' I told him; 'but think of your father, how angry he would be!' 'That will all come right in the end,' he said; 'my father has some sterling sense, and when he knows you——' Stephen went away before Ettie and Rhoda came back, and I have never seen him since."

"Never seen him since!" I echoed.

"Nor heard from him! He left home that night and has never returned. I always know where he is, because his mother writes to him often, and I never miss seeing his answers. I fancy I can tell from the writing on the envelopes what changes have been effected in him. He does not write the same hand now that he did when he first went away; he always uses one seal, with the motto 'Toujours le même;' and do you know, I believe it heartily, Stephen will never change to me."

I endeavoured to combat and to shake her belief, but seven years had rooted it in her peculiar nature too firmly for my arguments; I felt sure that she would be deceived and disappointed, but at last, in pity, I desisted from expostulation, and as the night was wearing on we had soon plenty to do.

There came a loud knock at the door, and my father's bell was rung sharply. Anna hastened to unlock the door, and a letter-carrier staggered into the house with a heavy load of bags, which were immediately opened and their contents emptied into large wicker baskets. There were bundles upon bundles of letters, with red, green, yellow, blue, and white bills, containing different entries, enough to bewilder the most self-contained person. All was hot and breathless haste. I heartily wished that those suspicious and querulous old maids and betrothed young ladies, who are always imagining their interesting correspondence is fraudulently investigated in the post-office, had to take a turn at that hurried labour, which engrossed every moment and every faculty.

My father was in many respects well fitted for his post. Like some other men, he was far more careful and solicitous for the business of others than for his own, so he attended well to the post-office, lest he should unintentionally injure any one whose letters might be delayed; and Anna was even painfully imbued with the same fear, that, by misreading or retarding a letter, she might be the innocent cause of domestic or business misfortunes. My

father should have been able to devote himself to the affairs of the office alone; but his salary as postmaster was only 130*l.* a year, and the necessity of having a house in the centre of the town compelled him to give 40*l.* a year in rent, which left of his government salary only 90*l.* for the maintenance of a family, three of whom were employed almost constantly, day and night, in the service of the public. We were consequently obliged to continue the business of the stationer's shop, which, badly managed as it was, added about 30*l.* to our income, though it greatly increased the anxiety and confinement that had destroyed Anna's health, and soon began to tell upon my own.

I applied myself diligently to my new duties as post-office clerk, which are not unsuited to women in a town like ours, as they require the unspeculative perseverance, obedience, and the patience under petty annoyances, which many women possess, or to which they are trained. We did not shrink from the monotony and confinement as most young men would have done, and it is at once evident that if we two and our father would give our whole time and energy for 90*l.* a year without expectation of a promotion, we were willing to work for a much lower wage. Yet I believe that in England the question is not how to grind down the public servants to the lowest salary, but how to provide the most competent persons for each office at a suitable remuneration. My father had rendered efficient service to our neighbourhood for nearly forty years, but his age—bordering upon seventy—and his increasing infirmities, no longer permitted him to perform his duties as the public interest required: what was to be done with him?

For some time my father's manner had filled me with indefinable apprehensions. He was oppressed and melancholy, and appeared too pre-occupied for attention to business. He left his letters for us to answer, and, instead of reading as was his wont in every leisure hour, he would sit silently watching us, now and then making remarks upon our appearance or occupation.

"Mary," said my father, one day after a long silence, "have you a white dress on?"

"No, father," I replied, looking at him anxiously.

"Then, God help me!" he cried, "I am at last blind. There is nothing before my eyes but a dim, floating vapour. I was not sure you were there till you answered me. Are Ettie and Anna in the room?"

"No," I said; and I rose to look closer into his dear eyes, which had always rested on us in kindness and intelligence until now.

"Mary, you have the strongest mind among us," he continued, "therefore you must hear the truth first. I have been losing my sight gradually. Now it is irrecoverably gone. Everything seems to have an undefined and lustrous outline."

"Oh, we will have the best aid and advice," I said, hopefully. "Look at me steadily. I will stand in a full light, and you will distinguish my features."



"It is all indistinct," he exclaimed; and sank back in his arm-chair with a groan. "I shall never see you again, my daughters."

His grey head fell upon my shoulder, and he sobbed as men sob who are unused to weep. The iron hand of trouble had opened the long-sealed fountain where Time had treasured up his tears, and they flowed slowly from his sightless eyes down his face. I could have wept too—wept passionately and rebelliously, but for his sake; but, forcing myself into calmness and strength, I soothed him with fond filial words, such as my lips had rarely uttered.

"We will be eyes to you," I said, when he was quieter; "you shall never feel lonely and in darkness; for nothing shall escape observation. What we never noticed before, we shall see now for your sake, and we will coin words to describe things to you. Ettie will always be ready to read to you; and we will lead you to all your favourite walks. You shall be so tended that we shall cheat you into the belief that you are not blind."

My father raised his head with a sigh of exhaustion, and, in a melancholy tone, quoted the lines,

"Oh, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,  
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse,  
Without all hope of day!"

"Think how richly you have stored your mind," I continued; "what precious memories you have to recal. And, more than that, you will constantly see us in your sleep; you remember what Pascal says: 'If we dreamed the same thing every night, it would probably affect us as much as the objects that we see every day: if an artisan were sure of dreaming he is a king for twelve hours each day, I believe that he would be nearly as happy as a king who should dream for the same length of time that he is an artisan.' Only to the outer world you will be dark; you will see us always, and always without change."

"You are a philosophical comforter, Mary," he said, with a sad smile.

"That is only one source of comfort, and not the highest," I answered; but I hurried from the room, to give way to the anguish of my heart.

Anna heard the sorrowful tidings with the quiet grief of one long used to the trials of life; but Ettie's undisciplined spirit raged and tormented itself with vague and passionate lamentings. I would not suffer them to go to my father in the first outburst of dismay, and when we rejoined him, he was himself gravely calm, and received us with an effort to show that his deprivation did not weigh heavily upon him. He assigned to us the various posts we should take in alleviating his blindness, and spoke cheerfully of the benefit it would be to Ettie to become his reader. But, while my two sisters and he were conversing of what could be done to continue his favourite studies, I was looking anxiously into the future, to see what changes would be effected in our circumstances. In a few days we wrote to inform Mr. Jermyn, the post-office surveyor of our district, of my father's misfortune, and he imme-

diately came over to see him. He was a keen, official-looking gentleman, ready in a moment to detect an imposition or an error; but kind and sympathising in his manner to my father when he discovered the full extent of his loss. He had not held his present post many months, and was anxious to reduce the expenditure of his district wherever he could do so without detriment to the public convenience. A little extra work had been put on here and there in various departments without extra pay, small innovations had been diligently suppressed, and he was gaining the character of a zealous official. But my father's case perplexed him: he had been postmaster of Tonwell for nearly forty years, and had grown old and blind in the service, yet had never received such a salary as would justify the expectation that out of it he would provide for his own old age; had he been a metropolitan official there would have been no difficulty about him, he might have been placed upon the list of pensioners and dismissed to retirement; but no provision existed at that time for the civil servants of the crown employed in provincial post-offices, and those who were incapacitated for the proper performance of their duties as postmasters, clerks, letter-carriers, or rural messengers, were consigned to poverty and dependence. Mr. Jermyn was very much perplexed.

"You have had 130*l.* a year for the last four years," he said, rather sharply, "and 90*l.* before that—have you made no provision out of it?"

"My father has had a family to support and educate," I replied, interrupting my father, who was going to answer his superior meekly.

"Well, I suppose your father's salary was not enough to enable him to save out of it, but he was not entirely dependent upon it."

"Trade has been very bad in Tonwell," said my father, "and my business was one of the first to suffer."

"I do not see that it is a question of business," I added; "you might have made a fortune by trade, or you might not; what I wish to know, Mr. Jermyn, is this: were my father's services and responsibility more than adequately paid by each year's salary?"

"They were not," he replied.

"Were they less than other crown servants in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin, who receive pensions?" I continued.

"Certainly not," he again replied.

"Yet he is altogether excluded from the provisions of every Superannuation Bill," I said, warmly. "He has served the public well or thirty-eight years, till he can serve no longer, and now what do you intend to do with him?"

Mr. Jermyn hesitated, it was an awkward case.

"We must in some measure consult the wishes of the public," he said. "I have already had a letter from the banker of this town, complaining that it is unsuitable and unbusinesslike for a post-office of such size and importance as this to have only women about it, and there is some reason in what he says; abuses are liable

to creep in, under rule like yours. Yet I cannot turn an old servant like your father adrift."

"You said we should consult the wishes of the public," I interrupted; "I do not think the English public would approve of such a thing."

"Do not be so vehement, my child," said my father.

"I assure you," resumed Mr. Jermyn, "I am only anxious to do the best for you. It is impossible for your father, to continue his active superintendence of this office and the numerous sub-offices; I have therefore decided to send you an efficient head clerk, to take the principal charge and responsibility; I shall obtain a grant of 50*l.* a year for his salary, to which you must add 30*l.*; thus your father's salary will be equivalent to a retiring pension of 100*l.* a year."

"Not at all," I exclaimed; "deduct 40*l.* rent, which we must give in this part of the town, and it leaves only 60*l.*, for which two of his daughters must work hard and constantly, in health or sickness. Thirty pounds a year clear to him, leaving us at liberty to earn money in our own way, would be far better. Pray do not call it a retiring pension; call it by a right name—an injustice."

I believe Mr. Jermyn really enjoyed my indignant protests; it was no fault of his, and an exhibition of spirit was rather refreshing to him. For the rest of his stay he employed himself in looking sharply into the office arrangements, and requested that when the head clerk came, the town letter-carrier should no longer assist in the nightwork.

Richard Trevor, the clerk appointed to our office by Mr. Jermyn, was a dark, fine-looking young man, of agreeable and insinuating manners; and, as he treated my father with apparently profound respect and consideration, and moreover professed to be of the same religious denomination, he speedily won his entire confidence. But Anna and I shrank from receiving a perfect stranger into the daily and equal intercourse that his position in our household necessitated; and my apprehensions grew stronger as I witnessed the influence he soon acquired over my blind father, and my young sister, Ettie.

A few weeks after Mr. Trevor's arrival, while he was one day absent inspecting some sub-offices, I was making up the afternoon mail, when a stranger entered the office abruptly from the outer room, and grasping both my hands eagerly, exclaimed, "Dearest Anna, I see you once again!"

I knew in a moment that the stranger before me was Stephen Ellesmere, and I determined to personate Anna for a few minutes; there was nothing to agitate me, and I withdrew my hands, saying coldly,

"You must allow me to attend to my business, Mr. Ellesmere; the mail must be despatched."

I proceeded deliberately to tie and seal the bags, and send them down to the station; and then seating myself on a high stool before the money-order desk, I assumed such an air of saucy imperiousness as I imagined suitable to our features, for we twin-sisters resembled one

another closely, though it was certainly an expression very foreign to the modest, submissive nature of my sister. I was in my own domain, and I looked upon the intruder with a calmness that chafed him greatly. With a ruler that I had taken from the desk, I waved him to remain at a distance, and asked,

"Do you wish to speak to me, Mr. Ellesmere?"

"You are not much altered in appearance," he said, gloomily, with an unconscious emphasis on the last word, "but you are keener and sharper looking than you used to be. You are a woman of the world now; you were a shy, domestic girl six years since."

"Years effect wonderful changes," I answered.

"Not in me," he exclaimed—"never in me. You are offended, and perhaps altogether estranged, because I never wrote to you; would I could tell you, dearest, how my mother, whom I love only next to yourself, implored me to try what absence would do, and how my father's anger would have made home miserable for her as well as myself, your kind heart would forgive me. I stipulated with my mother that she should always ascertain how you were, and tell me if you changed to me so far as to favour the love of another, I could rely upon her truth, and I heard that you continued faithful to me. How often when abroad, meeting only heartless women of fashion, have I longed to be a poor man for the sake of my true, pretty, home-like Anna."

"You are a poor man," I said, scornfully, with a fresh wave of my ruler; "you are dependent upon your father for the very bread you eat—you, a man of two-and-thirty years! Moreover, you are a selfish man, for so long as you believed me to be faithful to you, you never thought of the disappointment and suspense I might be enduring."

"Listen to me," he continued, eagerly; "when I left home, I was like the unjust steward: I could not dig, and to beg I was ashamed. I had been brought up to a life of pleasure and indulgence, and so long as I had a hope of my father's consent to our marriage I was unwilling to relinquish my early customs. But when I discovered that he could be inflexible, and that our future happiness and my own truest life depended upon my exertions, I sought to qualify myself for independence. I have studied the management of the banking business, and a situation in a Scotch bank is now open to me. I have come home to acquaint my father with my plans, and, if he will still not hear me, and if you yet love me, we will take our happiness into our own hands. Another year of waiting, and then, my Anna, will you not pardon my long silence and give me the poor man's home I have so long coveted?"

Stephen had drawn closer to me, for I had dropped my ruler and hidden my face in my hands in tearful gladness for my sister. His arm was stealing round my waist, when I looked up and said, slowly,

"But I am not Anna. I am Mary!"

He recoiled to the opposite counter, and I laughingly continued:

"It is nearly the same thing, dear Mr. Ellesmere. I am the only person to whom Anna has confided her secret. I was very jealous for her, and wished to hear how you could explain your neglect, but I can assure you she is far too gentle and humble ever to blame you. She is not very strong now, and you must be very quiet and undemonstrative in your manner to her, for she is a grave, modest girl, more sobered by the wear and tear of life than many are. Come into the sitting-room, she is alone there."

After thus cautioning him, I led him into the room, with the simple announcement, "Anna, here is a very old friend come to see you." I expected timidity, and hesitation, and blushes, but Mr. Stephen opened his arms, and she, overwhelmed with amazement, fluttered into them like a weary bird into her nest.

I left the lovers together; myself meditating on the singular anomalies in the human character, and viewing my sister in particular under a new phase.

Our blind father could not refuse his approbation of Stephen and Anna's engagement, when he heard how admirably and determinately Stephen had fitted himself for independence. Mr. Ellesmere was furious at his son's constancy; and as neither would give up his cherished plans they parted in anger, and, in a few days, Stephen left us for North Britain.

Before Mr. Trevor had been with us many months, it became evident to us all that Ettie had given to him the warm, impulsive, first love of a young heart. It pleased him, and he appeared to reciprocate it in a less ardent, somewhat trifling manner. I had never grown reconciled to him, and this manner, which he could not conceal from me, increased my dislike. We knew absolutely nothing of his former life and associates: his letters, which would have given me some clue to his friends and family, never fell into my hands, for he was careful to put them in the bags without my observation. When at our work in the office I never looked at him without meeting his eye, as if he knew instinctively that I suspected and watched him, and he wished to baffle me. So, as the second winter after my return home came on, I procured a pair of thick blue glasses, under pretext of the gaslight being painful to my eyes, and to his evident annoyance I was thus enabled to notice him and his movements unseen. My father was well pleased with Trevor's declared attachment to Ettie; he was almost angry when I opposed it, and spoke of the clerk's earnest piety; in this matter I had little influence, as being suspected of a slight taint of continental laxity in affairs of religion. Of course he expected to be the future postmaster of Tonwell, and my father believed that his business as bookseller would soon revive in younger hands. Ettie and Anna were therefore happy in their engagements, and but for my perverse misgivings our family would have had no troubles but those arising from very limited means.

As one person could not discharge the night duties, and the town postman was no longer permitted to assist, it was still necessary for some one to get up at three every morning to assist Mr. Trevor. Anna was unable to continue her exertions, and the work consequently fell upon me. But our old nurse, who remained as our only servant, was so much scandalised at this necessary arrangement, and she so cordially entered into my dislike of our head clerk, that she persisted in rising always at the same hour, in order to be near at hand. Her kitchen was connected with the office by a high narrow door, like those in very old houses, and I resisted steadily every intimation of the deputy surveyor's that this communication ought to be closed.

Affairs were in this condition, when one morning, before Anna was up, there came Stephen's sharp, peculiar knock at the outer door, and he entered with the exclamation, "Home once more, my beloved An——Mary, I mean!"

I took him into Nanny's kitchen, where we could be sure of being alone, and he confided to me how a crisis in the business of his father's bank had induced old Mr. Ellesmere to seek his son's professional skill to aid him in extricating himself from his difficulties. It was not publicly known, but there was a general and growing suspicion that the bank negotiations had been too much left to subordinates; and daily increasing calls upon them threatened an early panic.

In this embarrassment, a friendly interest at the post-office enabled the people of the bank to post letters at the very latest moment, and to receive them long before established hours in the morning. Of course we were anxious to afford them every help in our power. Old Mr. Ellesmere was ashamed to remember how he had sought to displace my father; but he conquered his feeling so far as to come once or twice to acknowledge his obligation to us: to our father he was unaffectedly sympathising, and he treated us with a gracious but somewhat distant politeness, which awed and agitated Anna extremely, while I, regarding him as a fellow-mortal, and something more than a fellow-sinner, was so entirely unembarrassed, that it was evident he felt more at home and better pleased with me.

After a few days of great anxiety, Stephen joined us one evening in Nanny's kitchen. Only my sisters and I were there, and he told us that his only hope of extricating his father from his difficulties rested upon a large remittance, which he expected by the post two mornings hence. While he was talking, Trevor's voice was heard calling Ettie into the sitting-room. Stephen knew of my dislike to him; but, as Anna disagreed with me on that single topic, he only laughed at my prejudices. By a strange combination of circumstances, he had never seen Trevor, and now, at my suggestion, he stole out into our town garden, guided by Anna's warm little hand, to peep through the uncurtained window of the sitting-room. There knelt Trevor, beside Ettie, drawing down her head till her bright curls fell upon his handsome face, and her whispering lips



rested almost against his ear. Stephen had imagined him a raw, awkward boy, but when he saw one who greatly excelled himself in exterior advantages, he acknowledged the full force of my objections to his intimate, domestic position in our home, and grew jealous and uneasy. Anna wished to get up the morning named, and I did not oppose her, for Stephen was to come for his letter at five. When she rose at three, I watched her, as in a dream, dress herself in a pretty morning wrapper, and arrange her soft brown hair, until Trevor came calling impatiently at the foot of the stairs.

Upon entering the office, Anna immediately seized the London bag, and eagerly sought the expected packet; she stamped it herself, and laid it carefully aside, leaving the other letters to the stamper. Old Nanny had taken her usual post in the kitchen, and, when the stamping was finished, and the stamper gone, she sat half dozing by the fire, but by and by the absence of customary sounds aroused her, and she tried to open the door communicating with the office; it was fastened inside. With a quick apprehension of mischief, she hastened round to the other door, which she found locked. She had presence of mind to come and wake me quietly, and with a duplicate key, which I possessed, we soon entered the office. Trevor was not there, of course, but Anna lay pale and insensible upon a heap of bags near the counter.

I immediately guessed the meaning of the scene before me, and, as I bent over my sister, I heard the shrill whistle of an early London train, which doubtless was conveying our confidential head clerk from his fruitful field of labour. The usual appliances restored Anna to consciousness, and, after a few hurried words, I left her, pallid and trembling, under Nanny's care. With the mechanism of habit I proceeded to finish the sorting of the letters, while my mind was busy in conjecturing what I ought to do. If I made the robbery known at the police-station of our own town, the news spreading from one to another would bring upon the Ellesmeres the accumulation of claims which would be their ruin. Thus pondering, I collected the letter-bills from the various towns, and finding one of them missing, I put my hand into the bag to which it belonged; from the bottom I drew forth a letter, which had stuck between the seams, and had not fallen out when the bag was emptied: it was in Trevor's hand, and bore the stamp of our office dated the night on which Stephen had spoken confidentially to us. He had evidently slipped it into the bag after the tied bundles of letters had been put in. It had been missed at the post-office to which it was addressed, and consequently had been returned to us by the next mail. Here, then, was an important and certain clue to his route; and, as I held it in my hand, a tremor of exultation quivered through my whole frame. A feasible plan pre-

sented itself to me. At five a train started to our country town where Mr. Jermyn lived, and leaving the work to Anna, and what chance aid she could obtain, I was speedily on my way to Longborough, with Trevor's returned letter, which I was, of course, unauthorised to open.

Trevor's letter was addressed to his "dear wife," and instructed her to meet him at Southampton before noon that day. Mr. Jermyn at once communicated these circumstances to the superintendent of police, and I returned home in time to start Stephen off by the second train to Southampton, to claim the packet that was sure to be found in Trevor's possession.

It would be vain to attempt to describe my father's grief; and of Ettie's agony none of us have ever spoken from that time to this.

By night Anna was delirious; and, after the excitement of the day, I had to begin an anxious watch beside my twin-sister, Stephen's poor Anna, for whom he had waited and worked eight long years. She lay tossing to and fro, and raving of the work that had wasted her youthful energies and bodily strength.

What need is there to tell of Trevor's arrest and conviction; of the black shadow that fell on Ettie's youth; of Anna's dangerous illness and Stephen's despair; of Mr. Ellesmere's pride and prejudice broken down by his son's great sorrow; and of the quiet marriage that quickly followed Anna's recovery?

The laws of compensation and change move the machinery of life as upon wheels. After the lapse of a few years, Ettie married a younger brother of Stephen's; Mr. Jermyn was at the wedding, and I could not help moralising, as women love to do when they believe themselves in the right, especially upon a public question. I dare say I uttered many fallacies on the effects of low salaries upon honesty.

"You talk like a woman," was the only reply Mr. Jermyn vouchsafed to my remarks.

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